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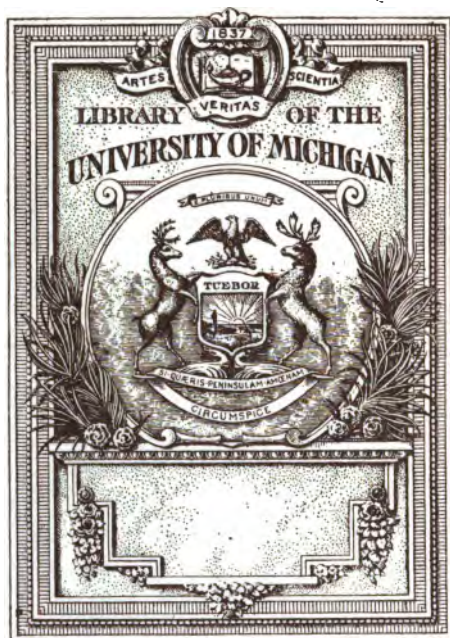
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# **Prisoners of the Great War**



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A "COOTIE HUNT" AT MÜNSTER



# PRISONERS OF THE GREAT WAR

AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENT  
OF CONDITIONS IN THE PRISON  
CAMPS OF GERMANY

BY

CARL P. DENNETT

AMERICAN RED CROSS DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TO SWITZERLAND  
IN CHARGE OF FINDING, FEEDING, CLOTHING AND  
OTHERWISE CARING FOR AMERICAN PRISONERS  
IN GERMAN PRISON CAMPS



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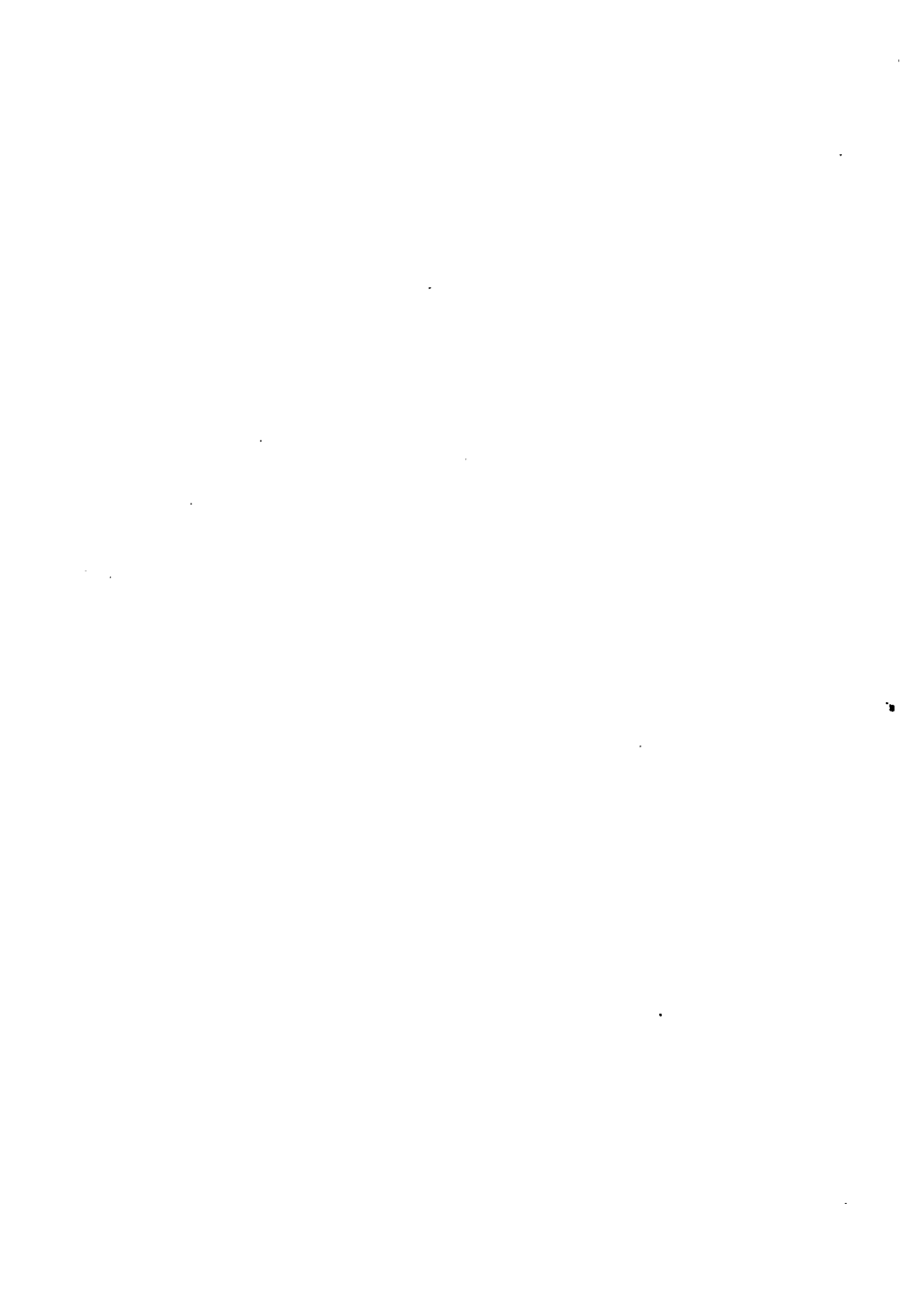
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# **Prisoners of the Great War**



# PRISONERS OF THE GREAT WAR

## Chapter I

### RETURNING PRISONERS

UNDER the French and English agreements with Germany it was provided that prisoners suffering from certain classes of wounds or diseases should be interned in Switzerland for the duration of the war. Later it was provided that prisoners of a certain age (forty-five to forty-eight years), who had been in prison camps for a total of eighteen months or more, were to be exchanged head for head under conditions which prohibited them from going within a certain distance of the front during the war.

As a result of these agreements thousands of prisoners of war were interned in Switzerland or passed through in the process of being exchanged.

For the most part the trains of returning prisoners arrived at Berne at 1.50 in the morn-

## Prisoners of the Great War

ing, and there were five hundred to six hundred prisoners on each train. Berne was the first stop after leaving Germany, and the men were there fed and given fresh clothing. As the trains pulled into the station, the car windows were crowded with eager faces peering out to get their first glimpse of friends, countrymen, allies. The disembarkation took place under the supervision of Swiss officers, and the men lined up on the platform in military formation, but informally and at ease.

The prisoners were then marched two hundred at a time into the restaurant, where the authorized relief society, French, Belgian, or English, had arranged for hot coffee and sandwiches. Each prisoner was also given a few postal cards, and the eagerness with which these men seized the first opportunity to write home freely was indeed pathetic. Food was neglected and their attention was completely absorbed in sending the first word for months — maybe for years — that had not passed through the hands of the German camp censor — free to write, free to tell the truth — free mentally — free physically — the circle of the



AMERICAN PRISONER TRAIN PASSING THROUGH BERN  
EN ROUTE TO FRANCE



## Returning Prisoners

life of a soldier completed, the entire round made — enlistment, battle, capture, perhaps wounded, months or years in prison, internment in Switzerland, or repatriation, back home, never to fight again, never to go within thirty kilometres of the zone of combat during the war.

It was a lurid but picturesque business, at two o'clock in the morning, this questioning prisoners of war of all nationalities, just out of their prison camps — Frenchmen, Englishmen, Australians, Canadians, New Zealanders, Moroccans, Algerians, Indians — all colors and shades from all corners of the earth.

I was provided with the proper badge, or brassard, and permitted by the Swiss guards to circulate among them freely and interview them. Some were shy and reserved; others perhaps a little affected mentally by their imprisonment and hardships; still others affected with barbed-wire disease, a well-recognized form of neurasthenia caused by confinement for long periods in barbed-wire enclosures. This disease became so prevalent and well defined that men were freed from German prison

## Prisoners of the Great War

camps as unfit for further military duty and interned in Switzerland because of it.

I have talked with many men on their first night out of Germany after four years' imprisonment. A few cigarettes and some kind remarks, confidence won, and the flood-gates of memory opened! First one, then another, told an experience, and as they found that I knew the camps, the prison rules, what a "working Kommando" meant, what a "reprisal camp" signified, and what a "colis" brought to a starving man — they gathered around eagerly. They knew that I understood their camp language and their troubles and they eagerly told everything.

Some of the questions asked of them were: "Have you been receiving your food parcels regularly? Did you have cooking facilities at Rastatt, Lamsdorf, or Mannheim? Were you given an opportunity to get fuel with which to cook? What were your facilities for sleeping? Your toilet facilities? Did your mail arrive regularly? How was the hospital? Were there any Americans in your camp? How many? What condition were they in? What do they



## Returning Prisoners

need? How many sick or wounded in hospital? Did they send out any messages or requests? Were you out on a working Kommando, and where? What treatment did you receive? Were you punished, and what was the form of punishment? Have you been in the mines?"

This last question brought out the heart-breaking experiences, especially from the French prisoners — "Have you been in the mines?"

*"Effroyable! Terrible! C'est le mort."*

Of all the prisoners with whom I talked, running into hundreds, I never met one who had any but horrible recollections of his work in the mines, and especially the salt mines — very high temperature, crouching positions, abuse by the civil miners or bosses, blows, kicks, far underground where there was no escape, no hope but to bear it and try to live through it, no restraining influence of any kind against the civil miner except perhaps a brutal guard. A prisoner made a mistake, or his guard was ill-tempered, or the civil miner (who naturally did not like the prisoners in the mines) had a fit of temper — then the poor prisoner was struck,

## Prisoners of the Great War

knocked down or kicked, and if he threw up his hand to save himself and the motion was taken for one of resistance, God help him! When he went or was carried to the surface and registered a complaint, he was told that it was a lie. If some humanitarian officer took enough interest to investigate, the civil miners or guards would testify that the man's bruises were due to an accident, and that ended it. Of all work to which the prisoners of war in Germany were driven, the mines were justly the most dreaded. The prisoner was defenseless against men who had him underground, where they could freely indulge in their brutality in all forms.

Then there were the marshes, where men stood in water knee deep all day long. I have authentic reports of large groups of men working in the open, who were not allowed to attend to the calls of nature for the entire day, on the pretext that a guard must be sent with each man and that the guards could not be spared.

As a result of these interviews, with returning and escaped prisoners, and with other prisoners interned in Switzerland, nearly complete information was obtained as to conditions and



AN EAST-INDIAN PRISONER



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## Returning Prisoners

treatment in German prison camps and on working Kommandos. As a further check we had frequent reports from the Spanish Embassy at Berlin, whose representative inspected at frequent intervals the camps occupied by our men, and submitted written statements of their condition, treatment, and needs.

As this is being written, I have also just talked with the first contingent of American prisoners to come out of Germany since the signing of the armistice.

That the reader may clearly understand the situation, it seems desirable to give the definition of some of the special terms used in this book.

*Working Kommandos:* These were the working parties sent out from the main camps. There might be many such Kommandos tributary to a camp, and they might consist of a number of men or only one man. Single men might be sent out to work on a farm, or in a small factory, while any number might be sent to various larger factories, or on large farms, or into coal, salt, or other mines, into stone quarries, or to work on the highways or railways.

## Prisoners of the Great War

The actual place where the work was performed was usually not stated by the German authorities, and the right of neutral representatives to visit and inspect these Kommandos depended entirely upon circumstances, the German military authorities taking the position that to freely give the right to investigate men on Kommandos might admit delegates to factories where trade secrets could be secured. The men on these Kommandos might be situated many miles from the parent camp, and in many instances they lived under guard where they were employed.

If the working Kommando consisted of several men, it was usually under the surveillance of a German non-commissioned officer called a "Feldwebel," who might, or might not, be the brutal type of man. There might be any number of guards according to the size of the working party. The greatest abuses of prisoners have occurred on these Kommandos. It was not unusual to have one prisoner assigned as assistant on a farm, in which case there was no guard. The prisoner, however, was usually placed in a section of the country where it was

## Returning Prisoners

very difficult to escape. The treatment of the prisoner in these cases depended almost entirely upon the condition and disposition of the farmer to whom he was assigned.

These working Kommandos were always officially attached to a camp, and all mail and food parcels were sent to the main camp and forwarded from there to the places where the prisoners were employed. It was not at all unusual to have 30,000, 40,000, or 50,000 prisoners attached to a given camp, while the report of the neutral delegate on visiting the camp revealed not more than 5000 or 6000 actually in the camp at the time of the visit, the others being out on working Kommandos. In September, 1917, there were approximately 600,000 prisoners of war, whose address was given as Limburg Camp. An actual inspection of the camp revealed only 2400 men. In other words, 597,600 prisoners attached to the camp were out working, and many of them must have been in the zone of the armies.

*Camp Help Committees:* These were committees elected from among the prisoners themselves and varying in size according to the num-

## Prisoners of the Great War

ber of prisoners of that nationality in the camp. The relief societies of the country of origin encouraged these organizations. In the case of American prisoners, we organized a camp help committee wherever there was a sufficient number of men. The province of these committees was to minister to the wants and welfare of their fellow countrymen in that particular camp, to receive reserve supplies of food and clothing, distribute them among the prisoners, and take care of newly arrived prisoners. In addition, the committees investigated and presented complaints as to treatment, and negotiated with the camp Kommandantur for improved conditions. One of their most important functions was the forwarding of food, clothing, and mail to other prisoners attached to their camp who might be out on working Kommandos. The prison authorities assigned storerooms to the camp help committees for the storage of reserve food and clothing supplies. These committees reported direct to the relief societies of their country of origin, requisitioning new supplies as needed, anticipating their requirements in so far as possible, to guard against any prospective





**AMERICAN CAMP HELP COMMITTEE AT BRANDENBURG**

**Chief Gunner's Mate James Delaney, President of the Committee, in Chief Petty Officer's Uniform. This picture was taken in the Prison Camp**



## Returning Prisoners

need of their fellow prisoners, and estimating the needs for new arrivals.

*Colis*: This was the common name for the packages of food and clothing which were sent to prisoners of war, and originated with the French. It is the French word for "package."

*Reprisal Camps*: These were camps in which prisoners were placed in reprisal for some presumed offense on the part of the enemy government. The prisoners who were sent to these camps were usually perfectly innocent of any offense, being selected at random and subjected to the most abominable conditions for real or supposed offenses with which they had no connection, and over which they had no control. It was a hideous form of abuse, well known to and sanctioned by the German military authorities.

*Kommandantur*: The title of the representative of the German Government in charge of a prison camp. He was almost invariably an officer of high rank in the German Army, a major or colonel. Many of them were brutal and took no steps to prevent abuse of prisoners by under-officers. Some even encouraged abuse. The

## Prisoners of the Great War

Kommandantur was the supreme power in the camp, and it lay in his power to make camp conditions excellent or otherwise, and to safeguard the physical condition and treatment of the prisoners. If the guilty are brought to justice, some of these Kommandanturs would doubtless receive the same treatment accorded the commander of Andersonville Prison after our Civil War. He was tried for his brutality and hanged, a good precedent to follow with men who permitted brutality, starvation, and neglect of absolutely helpless men.

## Chapter II

### SUFFERING IN GERMAN CAMPS

NEVER before in the history of mankind have such conditions existed with reference to prisoners as in the great world war.

From time immemorial it has been the custom of the captor state to provide food and clothing for its prisoners of war. Germany, however, notoriously failed to even provide them with the necessities of life, and it is a fact beyond dispute that the ravages of disease, including tuberculosis, due to malnutrition, and even starvation, have killed tens of thousands of prisoners in the hands of the German military forces. Other thousands have been interned in Switzerland, or repatriated in their homes, human wrecks as the result of the failure of the German Government to properly feed and clothe them. Neither treaty nor humanitarian consideration induced the German Government to treat its prisoners of war as human beings, or make much effort to preserve their lives.

## Prisoners of the Great War

Prisoners told me of witnessing actual combats between starving men for a piece of bread or other morsel of food. The principal victims of this abuse were the Russians, Italians, and Roumanians, although in the early stages of the war the English and French also suffered somewhat for lack of food and clothing.

Gradually the Allied Governments devised means for getting supplies to these needy prisoners. English prisoners received their supplies from the Central Prisoners of War Committee at London, which had relief dépôts at Berne and Copenhagen. French prisoners were supplied by various relief bureaus in Switzerland and France. The French prisoner was compelled to pay for his food if he or his friends were able to do so, and he might order packages varying in cost from one franc to eleven francs. He might even have a bottle of wine included, and frequently did, with such delicacies as potted chicken and pâtés of various kinds, if he had the money to pay. These parcels were shipped principally by the Bureau de Secours aux Prisonniers de Guerre, Section Franco-Belge at Berne. If a French prisoner could not

## Suffering in German Camps

pay for his food and had no friends who would do it for him, he was known as one of the "Nécessiteaux" and referred to one of a number of relief bureaus which sent him enough sustaining food to carry him along comfortably.

When the American Government sent its troops to France in 1917, the American Red Cross promptly realized the necessity for action and took immediate steps to see that no American prisoner of war should suffer for lack of food or clothing. They communicated with Ellis Loring Dresel, who had been associated with Ambassador Gerard in the American Embassy at Berlin, and who was then in Switzerland, and asked him to look after the prisoners pending definite arrangements. Owing to the visits that Mr. Dresel had made to the prison camps in Germany before the United States entered the war, he had a good working knowledge of the situation. He leased a storeroom at Bumpliz, a suburb of Berne, and the American Red Cross sent over Mr. W. W. Husband, formerly Secretary of the United States Immigration Commission in Washington, and Mr. Ralph E. Bailey, who had been Secretary of the

## Prisoners of the Great War

Groton School, to assist Mr. Dresel. These men took charge of supplies sent by the American Red Cross to provide for the immediate situation. It was in November, 1917, that the first food parcel was shipped to the American military prisoners in Germany.

In April, 1918, I was requested by the American Red Cross to go to Switzerland to take charge of this work and pave the way for a Red Cross Commission to Switzerland. I immediately went to Washington to investigate, and found that the United States Government had constituted the American Red Cross its authorized agent to locate and provide for American prisoners, that large numbers of American troops were being sent abroad, and that it was imperative that immediate preparations be made on a large scale to provide for any probable number of prisoners; that quicker means of communication were required to find the prisoners promptly in Germany, get food and clothing to them, and advise the United States Government and the families of the prisoners of their whereabouts and condition. I sailed for Switzerland four days later, accompanied by



## Suffering in German Camps

Mr. Athol McBean, of San Francisco, who was to take charge of warehouses, supplies, and transportation.

The American Red Cross Commission to Switzerland was duly authorized by the Swiss Government about two months after my arrival in Switzerland, and consisted of

J. B. Dimmick, of Scranton, Pennsylvania.

Dr. Alfred Worcester, of Waltham, Massachusetts.

Ralph Stewart, Esq., of Brookline, Massachusetts.

Athol McBean, of San Francisco, California.

Carl P. Dennett, of Boston, Massachusetts.

No attempt is made in this book to describe the whole work of the commission, but only so much as applies to prisoners of war.

The work of the commission covered a broad field of activities other than the work for prisoners of war, which was my particular department. There was also the Relief for Italian Prisoners and Serbian Prisoners, Civilian Relief, Refugee Relief, Belgian Children, Training Schools for Interned Prisoners, and other similar activities which were divided among the

## Prisoners of the Great War

other members of the commission by departments.

The constructive work accomplished by my associates was of the greatest importance in their various departments, as was also their coöperation and help in my work.

After the armistice Mr. Ralph Stewart took over the supervision of the important work of repatriation of prisoners, and it was due to his direction that the American prisoners were so promptly and comfortably returned to France.

Dr. Alfred Worcester's efficient and self-sacrificing work in Switzerland was of the highest importance, especially to the Italian prisoners, the French and Belgian prisoners, the civilian refugees, and the tubercular Serbian officers. Mr. McBean gave very valuable assistance in building up the system of warehouses and supplies. Mr. Dimmick, as Chairman of the Commission, and as a representative on the Prisoner of War Conference, aided materially with his constructive advice and counsel.

On our arrival at Berne, Major Carl Taylor, of the American Red Cross at Paris, was temporarily in charge. There were at this time 211

## Suffering in German Camps

American prisoners in Germany, of whom 113 were civilians, 11 naval, and 87 military.

A thorough study of the situation developed that it was not only a question of food and clothing, but that the American prisoners in Germany required everything else necessary to sustain life as human beings. This meant such articles as soap, towels, needles, thread, buttons, pins, razors, hair-brushes, combs, scissors, tooth-brushes, shaving-soap, tooth-paste and powder — in fact, all food and clothing as well as every essential toilet article.

At that time the German Government was giving the prisoners a very small quantity, two hundred grammes per day, of dark, soggy bread, coffee made of toasted acorns or chestnuts, thin, watery soups, very few vegetables and practically no meat. This ration was entirely inadequate to sustain life, and prisoners of other nationalities who were not receiving food parcels were dying of starvation. American, French, and English prisoners were unable to eat the food provided by the Germans. I cabled Washington for supplies sufficient to provide for 10,000 American prisoners for a

## Prisoners of the Great War

period of six months and then immediately started to create an organization sufficient to provide for any number of American prisoners likely to be captured.

In July, 1918, I was informed that there were more than a million American soldiers in France, and that another million were coming over at once. Steps were immediately taken to provide for a total of 50,000 prisoners. Arrangements were made with General Rogers, the Chief Quartermaster of the A.E.F. in France, to furnish all the food and clothing necessary from his stocks there, the American Red Cross to furnish certain luxuries for the military prisoners and everything required for the civilian prisoners.

Some 200,000 packing-boxes for food were obtained, and an option taken on a still further supply. A second storehouse was rented at Bumliz, and two more were built. A large storehouse was also rented in the suburbs of Lausanne, at Renens, and an addition built so that ten loaded freight cars could be run on the inside at one time for loading or unloading. Another large storehouse was rented at Kehrsatz,

## Suffering in German Camps

another suburb of Berne, and was devoted to the storage of clothing, blankets, and miscellaneous articles. Still another storehouse was arranged for at Copenhagen, to provide against any interruption to traffic or lack of railroad equipment in Switzerland.

## Chapter III

### FINDING THE PRISONERS

THE principal source of information as to American prisoners in Germany was through prison lists transmitted by the German Minister of War to the Berlin Red Cross. These lists were then sent by the Berlin Red Cross to the International Red Cross at Geneva, and by the latter to the American Red Cross at Berne. This was a very roundabout method. The Berlin War Office was notoriously slow in supplying the information, and the prison lists were inaccurate, with names misspelled, and many missing. They frequently gave men as located at camps from which they had long since been removed. These official German prisoner lists were a disgraceful exhibition of German inefficiency.

The American Expeditionary Forces had no German prisoners on June 1, 1918, having turned them all over to the French military forces. This was a distinct disadvantage in ob-



IN FRONT OF U.S. MILITARY ATTACHÉ'S OFFICE, BERNE.  
NOVEMBER, 1918

Left to right, front row: Major Carl P. Dennett, in charge of Department of Prisoners of War, American Red Cross; Colonel W. F. H. Godson, U.S. Military Attaché; Major Ernest Schelling. In rear: Lieutenants De Waldt and Howe, office of Military Attaché

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## Finding the Prisoners

taining information on a reciprocity basis. I went to General Headquarters of the A.E.F. in France, with Colonel W. F. H. Godson, the Military Attaché at Berne, and called attention to the fact that it was proposed to have a conference between representatives of the German Government and the United States regarding prisoners of war; that the American forces had no German prisoners of war, and that it would also be a great advantage in getting information about American prisoners, if the German prisoners could be retained after capture instead of being turned over to the French forces as heretofore.

Immediate action was taken on this suggestion, and within a few weeks the American military forces reported more than 2000 German prisoners, and within four months, more than 37,000 German prisoners, in their possession. I then arranged with General Headquarters of the A.E.F. in France to supply to the American Red Cross at Berne exclusive lists of all German prisoners captured by the American Army. This placed us in a very strong position to demand reciprocity from the Germans for

## Prisoners of the Great War

all forms of information furnished regarding their prisoners.

Arrangements were made with the Frankfort Red Cross in Germany to forward direct to the American Red Cross at Berne, the lists of American prisoners of war taken by the German military forces, giving full name, name of nearest relative or friend, date and place of birth, date and place of capture, whether wounded or not, and camp address; also to send by telegraph the names of all officers and aviators captured, and to answer all telegraphic inquiries. This was all done under an agreement for reciprocity on our part. But after all, it seemed that the quickest, surest, and safest method to find a prisoner was to have him report himself, if possible. Accordingly I had postal cards printed and forwarded to all the prison camps in Germany on which the prisoner could report himself and supply all information required.

In all the prison camps in Germany, where there was a sufficient number of American prisoners, we organized camp help committees, and instructed them to report without delay all new

## Finding the Prisoners

arrivals of American prisoners in their camp to the American Red Cross at Berne; also to see that each newly arrived prisoner sent the card giving the full information requested. This information arrived very much quicker than the official prison lists and reduced the time required to locate prisoners in Germany by at least fifty per cent, and each system checked the other.

Promptly upon receipt of these cards at our Berne offices, the prisoners were catalogued, and all available information regarding them indexed and cross-indexed. The lists of names and addresses were sent to the storehouse, where prisoners were classified by camps and alphabetically, and names placed on the shipping directions to have individual packages of food sent weekly. Simultaneously a cablegram was despatched to Washington, giving the full name of the prisoner, the name of his nearest friend or relative, his camp address, and any other available information as to his being wounded or otherwise. The American Red Cross at Washington immediately notified the families in America. A cablegram was also despatched to General Headquarters of the A.E.F.

## Prisoners of the Great War

in France so that they could clear their records of missing men. Advices were also sent to the American Red Cross at Paris, that they too might clear their records and stop searching for these men in the hospitals in France.

By means of lists General Headquarters in France regularly notified us of all missing men. These names were placed on cards in a card index system in the Berne offices, and as soon as the men were located in Germany, their name cards were removed from the card index of missing men, full information was entered upon them, and they were filed alphabetically under the list of prisoners. The cards were also filed under the heading of the prison camps, and by classification as to company and regiment. In this way, we had at all times a complete index of all members of the American Expeditionary Forces who were missing, as well as of all prisoners in Germany. We were always in a position to answer any inquiries about any man who was missing or a prisoner, and, if a prisoner, could supply full information regarding him.

The work was organized into the following departments:

## Finding the Prisoners

*Bureau of Information*, which obtained and tabulated all information regarding missing men or prisoners, and answered all inquiries from the families in America.

Mr. Ralph Bailey, of Taunton, Massachusetts, was at the head of this bureau.

*Bureau of Relief*, which handled all communications in connection with supplies required by the camp help committees or by individual prisoners in Germany, saw that these requests were promptly filled, that the food packages and other relief supplies were regularly sent, and that they were properly receipted for by the prisoners.

Mr. Athol McBean, of San Francisco, took charge of this work.

*Bureau of Supplies*, which attended to the transportation and storage of all supplies in the various storehouses in Switzerland, and to the packing and shipping of the goods in accordance with information supplied by the Bureau of Relief.

Mr. McBean also looked after this department, assisted by Mr. Leon G. Levy, of San Francisco.

## Chapter IV

### FOOD AND CLOTHING

THE storehouse at Bumpliz was devoted to putting up individual parcels for prisoners and taking care of special orders. Each prisoner received an individual parcel of food addressed to him personally, and every prisoner, officer and private, received exactly the same food.

The first package delivered by the Camp Help Committee to every prisoner included both food and clothing and was made up as follows:

1 lb. corned beef	1 pr. drawers
1 lb. roast beef	2 prs. socks
1 lb. salmon	3 handkerchiefs
2 lbs. hash	2 towels
1 lb. jam	1 tube tooth-paste
1 bar soap	2 lbs. hard bread
4 5c. pkgs. tobacco	1 pt. evap. milk
1 overshirt	1 lb. sugar
1 undershirt	1/2 lb. coffee
2 cans pork and beans	1 tooth-brush
1 can tomatoes	1 comb
1 can corn	1 housewife
1 can peas	1 shaving-soap
	1 shaving-brush



CONTENTS OF FIRST PARCEL SENT TO PRISONERS

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## Food and Clothing

Thereafter regular food parcels were sent every week, the contents of the package making up the monthly ration for each prisoner being:

### ARMY A—*1st Week*

1 lb. corned beef  
1 lb. salt pork  
1 lb. salmon  
2 lbs. corned beef hash  
1 can pork and beans  
1 lb. dried beans  
1 lb. tomatoes  
2 cans corn  
2 cans peas  
4 lbs. hard bread  
1 lb. butter  
1 lb. sugar  
1 lb. prunes  
1 bar soap  
80 cigarettes or tobacco

### ARMY B—*3d Week*

1 lb. corned beef  
1 lb. roast beef  
1 lb. salmon  
2 lbs. corned beef hash  
1 can pork and beans  
1 lb. tomatoes  
1 can corn  
2 cans peas  
4 lbs. hard bread  
4 lbs. rice  
1 pt. evap. milk  
1 lb. sugar  
1 lb. coffee  
1 lb. raisins or figs  
80 cigarettes or tobacco

### ARMY C—*2d Week*

1 lb. corned beef  
1 lb. roast beef  
1 lb. salt pork  
2 lbs. corned beef hash  
1 can pork and beans

### ARMY D—*4th Week*

1 lb. corned beef  
1 lb. roast beef  
1 lb. salmon  
2 lbs. corned beef hash  
1 can pork and beans

## Prisoners of the Great War

### ARMY C—*2d Week* (continued)

1 lb. dried beans  
1 lb. tomatoes  
2 lbs. corn  
2 lbs. peas  
4 lbs. hard bread  
1 lb. sugar  
1/2 lb. cocoa  
1 lb. prunes  
1 pt. vinegar  
80 cigarettes or tobacco

### ARMY D—*4th Week* (continued)

1 lb. tomatoes  
1 can corn  
2 cans beans  
4 lbs. hard bread  
1 pt. evap. milk  
1 lb. sugar  
1 lb. coffee  
1 lb. jam  
1/2 lb. salt  
1 lb. chocolate or candy  
80 cigarettes or tobacco

In each package there was included a receipt in postal card form, which was signed by the prisoner in his own handwriting, and on which he stated exactly what he received and what was missing, if anything. Many of these cards were returned to America to be sent to the prisoner's family. Each shipment was checked against the receipt cards received back, and in this way we always had a record of shortages and knew how much each prisoner was actually receiving.

The same emergency first parcels of food and clothing were also sent to all naval and civilian



**“ARMY A” FOOD PARCEL (FIRST WEEK)**



**“ARMY B” FOOD PARCEL (THIRD WEEK)**

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## Food and Clothing

prisoners, as well as the same subsequent food parcels each week thereafter. It was, of course, impossible to forward clothing, shoes, and hats, until the sizes were known. To take care of this situation there was included in each original food parcel, as well as left in the hands of camp committees, a card with blank spaces for sizes of clothing, hats, shoes, gloves, etc., which the prisoner filled out and on which he gave the sizes in detail.

As the war went on, the prisoners were robbed more and more of their clothing, while they were in the zone of the armies, and it became necessary to get packages to them promptly, so that upon their arrival in the prison camps, they could at once be provided with uniform trousers, coats, hats, shoes, or overcoats. To meet this condition, we placed in the hands of American help committees in all camps where there was a sufficient number of American prisoners to organize such committees, or in the hands of the British or French help committees in camps where there were only a few Americans, a reserve supply of clothing of assorted sizes, so that when the prisoner

## Prisoners of the Great War

arrived at the camp, he found at hand whatever he might require. This arrangement worked very satisfactorily. Agreements were made with the commanders of the different camps to provide storage space for these reserve supplies, and they were placed under lock and key, so that they could only be visited jointly by a representative of the camp commander and a representative of the camp help committee. I have no record of any thefts of materials from these storehouses by the German authorities.

The same policy was followed with reference to food, and the original food parcels and reserve supplies of the weekly food parcels were placed in the hands of these camp help committees. We also forwarded to help committees bulk shipments of all classes of food, so they could not only take care of all emergencies in the way of unexpected arrivals of a large number of prisoners, but could make up for each man any articles which were missing in his food parcel when received by him.

It was not unusual, especially during the last three months of the war, for the German population in certain districts where they were very



nd



## Food and Clothing

short of food at that time, to loot the individual packages sent to the prisoners. At first such articles as soap and grease (butter or bacon) would be stolen, and the rest of the package left intact, but in September and October, 1918, food conditions became so bad in Germany that the packages would frequently be looted of sugar, coffee, canned meats, or canned vegetables. In some cases the packages would arrive with only the bread in them. In such instances the camp committee would immediately deliver to the prisoner whose package had been robbed, sufficient supplies from the reserve stores to make up his weekly ration. This overcame any actual suffering for lack of food by the American prisoners, and was a safeguard against the individual stealing from the parcels while in transit.

Connected with the camps were the various working Kommandos, and while men were officially designated as at a certain camp, they might in reality be several miles from the camp, working in a factory or on the railroads or highways. The addresses of these working Kommandos were never given out by the German

## Prisoners of the Great War

authorities, and the food and clothing had to be sent to the parent camp and forwarded from there, at first by the German authorities and afterwards by our help committees. When the food and clothing parcels arrived at the camp, they were opened and examined by the camp authorities. They were then repacked and shipped to the men on the various working Kommandos, where they were again opened by the officers in charge of the Kommandos. This gave additional opportunities for stealing, and was a system against which I protested, insisting that food parcels should be examined only once, and then in the presence of the prisoner to whom it was sent. This was finally agreed to by the German authorities and is incorporated in the Prisoner of War Agreement between the United States and the German Government.

## Chapter V

### WHEN A PRISONER IS CAPTURED

IN order to clearly understand some of the difficulties with which we had to contend it is necessary to know the general method of handling prisoners of war when captured by the German military forces.

They were first assembled into groups and searched for papers or maps and individually questioned by the German military intelligence officers in an effort to obtain from them information of military value. All sorts of methods were used to force such information from the prisoners, intimidation and, I am creditably informed, in some cases actual physical violence and even killing. Such methods, for instance, as holding a loaded pistol to a man's head, or a bayonet against his chest, with a threat of death if he did not give the information desired.

The German authorities were very quick to resent the slightest rumor of force on the part of the Allies to secure military information, and

## Prisoners of the Great War

it is my conviction that no inhuman methods were ever used to obtain such information from prisoners taken by the Allies.

The military information to be obtained from prisoners was regarded as so important that night raids were constantly made for the sole purpose of securing prisoners for the military information they might supply. The ordinary markings on the uniforms of prisoners taken in night raids might supply information as to company and regiment. Frequently a prisoner might reveal in some manner the division of which his regiment was a part; or the enemy might have previously obtained the information that a certain company or regiment constituted part of a certain division. By piecing this information together, in which the Germans were very expert, they could determine just what forces were confronting that particular section of the line.

The Germans attached great value to the importance of prisoners as a means of obtaining military information and spared no pains, trickery, threats, or expense to make the prisoners talk. They mixed with our prisoners spies who



OUTFIT FOR MILITARY PRISONERS

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## When a Prisoner is Captured

wore American uniforms and spoke perfect English to listen to their conversation and if possible win their confidence. They installed dictaphones and even had spies living in the camps among the prisoners for this purpose. We have had men reported as prisoners in German camps who were actually with their companies, the German spies obtaining their names and living in the camps as American prisoners.

After the military examination was completed, a record was made of the men, their names, addresses, nearest friend or relative, company and regiment, date and place of birth, and date and place of capture. The prisoners were then frequently placed at work behind the enemy's lines and often under fire of their own guns. This labor consisted usually of such work as digging trenches, building roads, barbed-wire entanglements, work on railroads, etc., and was contrary to all existing agreements.

The prisoner's stay behind the lines depended upon the amount of work the Germans wished done. During this period the prisoner

## Prisoners of the Great War

was on the list of missing and was behind an impenetrable screen where it was impossible to get in contact with him or obtain any information regarding him. This was the period of his greatest deprivation and suffering.

The prisoner was usually taken in battle and had only the clothes on his back, which were frequently muddy, bloody, and torn. If he was required to remain in these clothes without change of underwear for several weeks, and with no soap or towels, he inevitably suffered. The result was that he frequently reached quarantine camps in bad condition. He was detained in quarantine for approximately ten days. His clothing was disinfected and he was then sent to the prison camp in Germany which was assigned to the army corps by which he was taken prisoner.

Every army corps had its own prison camp and it was the plan to confine there the prisoners taken by that particular corps. Frequently the headquarters of the army corps would be located some distance from the prison camp. As an illustration of how this method worked, prisoners taken by the 17th Army Corps, whose



## When a Prisoner is Captured

headquarters were at Danzig, were sent to Tuchel Prison in Prussia.

In the process of reaching these various camps, the men would frequently pass through a number of other camps. In fact, we had many prisoners who had passed through five or more camps before reaching the permanent camp. The transfer of these prisoners from one camp to another was sometimes fast and sometimes slow, and caused great difficulty in getting food parcels to the men. We had no means of knowing the army corps by which any prisoner had been captured, or to what permanent camp he would be sent.

In the early stages of the war it was frequently the case that a prisoner would be sent to a camp where we never had any prisoners before, and in some cases where there were only Russians or Roumanians. This resulted in a painful delay in getting the food parcels to the prisoners. The parcels would be sent to the first camp to which the prisoner had been assigned, and it might happen that before the package reached that camp the prisoner had been sent to another camp, and in this way the

## Prisoners of the Great War

food parcel might follow him for a period of four or five weeks before finally reaching him. It was quite impossible to overcome these conditions in the early stages of the war as there were nineteen different army corps in Germany to each of which one or more prison camps were assigned, and a prisoner might be any number of weeks in reaching his permanent camp.

All of these difficulties had to be overcome by constant effort. Continual pressure was brought upon the German authorities through the Spanish Embassy at Berlin for a concentration of American prisoners. A special issue was made of having the American prisoners transferred from Tüchel Prison in Prussia to a point nearer Switzerland, as it was exceedingly difficult to get food supplies through and maintain satisfactory communication with the prison camps in Prussia. These efforts were finally successful, and a concentration of American prisoners was obtained in the camp of Rastatt on the banks of the Rhine, very convenient to Switzerland, where it was possible to organize a satisfactory camp committee,

## When a Prisoner is Captured

maintain large reserves of food and clothing, and handle the entire situation in a satisfactory manner.

On November 15, 1918, there were actually 2353 American prisoners in the camp at Rastatt, out of a total of 3602 in all camps in Germany. This was four days after the signing of the armistice, and was about two thirds of the American prisoners. As a further result of constant efforts, I obtained a concentration of the American army officers at the prison camps at Villingen, Karlsruhe, and Landshut, at which camps on November 15, 1918, there were 221 American officers out of a total of 290.

The civilian prisoners were concentrated for the most part at the four prison camps of Güstrow, Holzminden, Brandenburg, and Parchim, where there were 114 prisoners out of a total of 144, all civilians.

Of the naval prisoners, of which there was a total of ten sailors, eight were at Brandenburg and one each at Rastatt and Villingen. There were two naval officers, one at Stralsund and one at Villingen. The naval officer at Stralsund was in the company of four American army

## Prisoners of the Great War

officers, while the one at Villingen was with 170 American army officers.

On pages 43 and 44 is a complete statement of all American prisoners who were in the hands of the German military authorities, officially reported as of November 15, 1918, four days after the signing of the armistice.

It was the practice to send food and clothing parcels to every American prisoner, whether or not he was actually fighting with the American forces. It frequently happened that an American might be enlisted with the French or British forces, having enlisted before America entered the war. While it was understood that each country would feed the soldier prisoners who were enlisted with its armies, if an American were taken prisoner we fed and clothed him from our storehouses in Switzerland until actually assured in writing that he was being provided for by the country with whose troops he was enlisted at the time of capture. There was also a large number of Americans attached to, but not enlisted with, the French and British forces. These men were treated in exactly the same manner as if fighting with the American



STOREHOUSE FOR RESERVE SUPPLIES AT LAUSANNE



# When a Prisoner is Captured

AMERICAN RED  
CROSS, BERNE

PRISONER REPORT  
NO. 7 DATE 11, 15, 18

TOTAL NUMBER  
PRISONERS 3602

CAMP	ARMY OFFICERS	ARMY N.C.O.'s AND PRIVATE	NAVY OFFICERS	NAVY SAIORS	CIVILIANS
	Now reported	Now reported	Now reported	Now reported	Now reported
Altdamm.....	..	1	..	..	2
Alten-Grabow.....	..	..	..	..	1
Baden-Baden.....	1	..	..	..	..
Bayreuth.....	2	19	..	..	..
Berlin.....	..	4	..	..	3
Brandenburg.....	..	..	..	8	39
Cassel.....	1	35	..	..	..
Czersk.....	..	6	..	..	..
Danzig.....	1	..	..	..	..
Darmstadt.....	..	78	..	..	..
Dülmen.....	..	4	..	..	..
Erfurt.....	..	1	..	..	..
Frankfort on Main.....	..	1	..	..	1
Friedrichsfeld.....	..	11	..	..	..
Fürstenfeldbruck.....	3	24	..	..	..
Germersheim.....	..	4	..	..	..
Giessen.....	..	131	..	..	..
Göttingen.....	2	10	..	..	..
Graudenz.....	4	..	..	..	..
Güstrow.....	..	..	..	..	46
Hammelburg.....	..	35	..	..	..
Havelberg.....	..	..	..	..	3
Heuberg.....	..	4	..	..	..
Holzminde.....	..	..	..	..	14
Ingolstadt.....	2	4	..	..	..
Karlsruhe.....	26	16	..	..	3
Katzonan.....	..	..	..	..	2
Köln.....	3	..	..	..	..
Königsbrück.....	..	10	..	..	..
Kreuznach.....	..	1	..	..	..
Lamsdorf.....	..	1	..	..	..
Landau.....	..	2	..	..	..
Landshut.....	25	..	..	..	..
Langensalza.....	3	41	..	..	1
Lechfeld.....	..	25	..	..	..
Limburg.....	4	100	..	..	..
Luxemburg.....	3	..	..	..	..
Mainz.....	1	..	..	..	..
Mannheim.....	..	18	..	..	..
Merseburg.....	..	15	..	..	..
Meschede.....	..	33	..	..	..
Metz.....	5	33	..	..	..
Müncheberg.....	..	9	..	..	..
Münster.....	..	7	..	..	1
Neuhammer.....	..	4	..	..	..

# Prisoners of the Great War

AMERICAN RED  
CROSS, BERNE

PRISONER REPORT  
NO. 7 DATE 11, 15, 18

TOTAL NUMBER  
PRISONERS 3602

CAMP	ARMY OFFICERS	ARMY N.C.O.'s AND PRIVATE	NAVY OFFICERS	NAVY SAILORS	CIVILIANS
	Now reported	Now reported	Now reported	Now reported	Now reported
Oberhofen.....	..	1	..	..	..
Ohrdruf.....	1	4	..	..	..
Parchim.....	1	1	..	..	15
Rastatt.....	10	2348	..	1	4
Saarbrücken.....	2	14	..	..	..
Schweidnitz.....	1	..	..	..	..
Skalmierschutz.....	..	10	..	..	..
Sprottau.....	..	..	..	..	..
Stargard.....	..	35	..	..	..
Stendal.....	..	11	..	..	..
Stralkowo.....	2	3	..	..	..
Stralsund.....	4	..	1	..	1
Strassburg.....	..	2	..	..	..
Stuttgart.....	..	35	..	..	..
Tauberbischofsheim.....	..	4	..	..	..
Trier.....	6	..	..	..	..
Tüchel.....	2	22	..	..	..
Villingen.....	170	29	1	1	8
Waldesheim.....	2	..	..	..	..
Weingarten.....	..	1	..	..	..
Worms.....	..	15	..	..	..
Würzburg.....	..	2	..	..	..
Zerbst.....	..	5	..	..	..
Zwickau.....	2	28	..	..	..
War hospital 670, German field- postoffice 404.....	1	..	..	..	..
Total.....	290	3156	2	10	144

United States Army..... 3446  
United States Navy..... 12  
Civilian..... 144

Grand total..... 3602



## When a Prisoner is Captured

forces, and were all provided for during the term of their imprisonment from the American Red Cross supplies at Berne.

While the English and French had excellent bureaus for the feeding and care of their prisoners of war, the work was not centralized as in the case of the American prisoners. The relief work of the French was divided among a large number of different societies, each of which was responsible for a certain number of prisoners. They required all prisoners to pay for their food parcels, as previously mentioned. The English supplied only bread from their bureaus in Switzerland, the other food parcels being sent from England or Copenhagen.

The Italian Government had no organized relief for its prisoners of war. While to my knowledge there was no official statement to that effect, it was the general attitude of the Italian Government that the Italian prisoners taken at the first battle of the Piave were deserters, which was probably mainly true. No effort was made on the part of the Italian Government to provide them with food and clothing, and as a result these prisoners suffered

## Prisoners of the Great War

great hardships in both Austria and Germany. In Austria a great many died of starvation.

Mr. Ralph Stewart of the Red Cross Commission at Berne made a special trip to Italy in the interest of the Italian prisoners and succeeded in getting the Italian Government to agree to an arrangement for the relief of the Italian prisoners. The armistice was signed, however, before the arrangement became operative.

Thousands of repatriated Italian prisoners passed through Switzerland by way of Buchs, at which point the American Red Cross maintained a canteen service under the supervision of Dr. Alfred Worcester for the purpose of supplying them with necessary food and clothing on their arrival at the Swiss border. They were mostly in a deplorable condition. It was not unusual to have several dead on each train. The pulse of the men was low, indicating starvation. It was not high, as is the case in tuberculosis, and many of the men who were repatriated as tubercular were actually dying of starvation and promptly recovered when given nourishing food. I have photographs of Italian prisoners in the Austrian and German prison camps show-



**LIVING AND DEAD ITALIAN SOLDIERS IN THE PRISON CAMP  
OF SIGMUNDSHERBERG, AUSTRIA**

This shows clearly the horrible condition to which they were reduced by starvation.  
These pictures were taken secretly with a very small camera in the Prison  
Camp and smuggled into Switzerland by returning prisoners

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## When a Prisoner is Captured

ing men dead of starvation, and others on the verge of death.

The testimony of the returning prisoners showed that the condition of the Italians in the German prison camps was deplorable. The Allied prisoners did all they could to afford them relief in the German camps, sharing their food parcels with them. In Austria, however, there were few Allied prisoners other than Italians and Serbians. The food conditions there were bad and thousands of Italian prisoners in the Austrian camps died, or contracted incurable tuberculosis and other diseases as a result of starvation.

Serbian prisoners were sent ample supplies of food and clothing by the Bureau de Secours aux Prisonniers de Guerre, Section Serbe, at Berne. The Serbian Government obtained a loan of \$1,000,000 each three months from the United States Government to pay for the supplies which were purchased and shipped to Switzerland from the United States by the American Red Cross. From Switzerland, the supplies were shipped to the various prison camps in Austria. Serbia also provided for the Montenegrin prisoners.

## Chapter VI

### LIVING CONDITIONS

THE German prison camps consisted of enclosures surrounded by a barbed-wire fence about ten feet high; in some camps a single fence, in others an extra fence about fifty to seventy-five feet outside the first fence. To be caught in the space between the two fences meant death. The enclosure was frequently subdivided into compounds.

The hutments, or barracks, were usually built of wood, one story high, and might be of any length. Beds usually consisted of bunks and might be in one or two tiers, with mattresses filled with wood shavings, paper, and sometimes straw, excellent nests for all kinds of vermin which existed in greater or less degree in all camps. Insect powder was in constant demand to overcome this annoyance. There were usually two blankets provided for each prisoner.

Cooking facilities varied greatly in different camps. In some there were fairly well-equipped kitchens; in others each prisoner did his own

## Living Conditions

cooking on rough portable stoves. In some camps great difficulty was experienced in getting any fuel with which to cook, and in a great many there was constant complaint about the totally inadequate cooking facilities and lack of fuel. Heating was by means of stoves and lighting usually by electricity.

There was a canteen attached to each camp where various things could be purchased, such as mineral water and very poor cigarettes at very high prices. When the prisoner arrived his money was taken from him and camp money current only in that camp issued in its place. It was not unusual, however, for a prisoner to be robbed of all his money and other personal effects before reaching his permanent camp.

Prisoners were allowed to receive any number of letters or packages, but were allowed to send only two letters of two pages each and four postal cards per month. Some of the prisoners in order to circumvent the limit on correspondence hit on the excellent idea of writing one letter to the American Red Cross Commission at Berne containing eight or ten short messages to as many people. We would rewrite these

## Prisoners of the Great War

letters at Berne and send them as requested. In this way it was possible for a prisoner to send eight to twelve letters a month instead of two.

The food, clothing, and all other parcels were carefully examined before being delivered to the prisoner. We received many parcels containing personal effects, food, and favorite books which we examined and then forwarded to the prisoners. These packages usually arrived safely.

In some of the camps there were bands or orchestras organized by the prisoners. The musical instruments were bought in Germany by the prisoners, or they were sent to them by various relief societies from the country of the prisoner's origin. These musical organizations were usually international in character, America, France, England, and Italy all being represented. Among the parcels sent in from America was a package containing music with all the parts for a full band. This parcel was censored in our Berne office and was found to contain music with the following titles:

“Just Like Washington Crossed the Delaware  
Pershing Will Cross the Rhine”





**ALL PRISONERS WERE COMPELLED TO FACE TOWARD THE  
GERMAN OFFICERS IN PASSING**



**PARCEL DAY IN A GERMAN PRISON CAMP**



## Living Conditions

“It’s a Long Way to Berlin — but We’ll Get There”

“We’ll Knock the Heligo into Helligo out of Heligoland”

Of course this music would never be permitted to reach the prisoner to whom it was addressed, and, if sent, the prisoner might even be punished. It seemed too bad to lose the music, however, so we decided to cut the titles off the top and send it along. Our boys will have great fun when they find out the names of the tunes with which they have been serenading their German jailors.

The talent represented among the prisoners was varied and excellent. There were stars of the variety stage, actors of serious drama, comedians, dancers, and musicians. Theatres were arranged in many of the camps, make-up outfits and costumes were sent in, and the prisoners gave theatrical performances, concerts, and entertainments of various kinds.

In Switzerland there was a symphony orchestra of fifty pieces assembled entirely from the interned French prisoners. These men were accomplished musicians and played the best

## Prisoners of the Great War

music in a finished manner. Ernest Schelling, the famous American pianist, was much interested in this organization, assisted them to get music, and was arranging a tour of Switzerland for them at the time the armistice was signed. At the request of the prisoners in this orchestra members whose turn for repatriation came were permitted to remain in Switzerland by special arrangement of the French Government. This was constructive action on the part of the authorities, as one of the great problems confronting France is the reëducation of its returning prisoners in useful occupations.

Athletic games were permitted in the camps to a considerable extent. Most camps were provided with space for hand-ball and football, and the Americans of course introduced baseball. The equipment — balls, bats, gloves, masks — was sent to the American prisoners by the Y.M.C.A. By special agreement between the Y.M.C.A. and the Red Cross, it was arranged that the Y.M.C.A. should furnish all books, games, and athletic paraphernalia for the prisoners.

Mr. Conrad Hoffmann, a Y.M.C.A. delegate,

## Living Conditions

found out what they needed for recreation, amusements, and educational activities and the supplies were shipped from Berne and Copenhagen into the camps. Educational classes were conducted in many camps and prisoners had an opportunity to study, especially languages. There were teachers, professors, and intellectuals in the camps, and prisoners really desirous of improving their time had an opportunity to do so. We received numerous requests for educational and scientific books and in most camps there were very good libraries. ¶

In the prison camp of Rastatt American prisoners started a newspaper known as the "Barbed Wireless," a delicious bit of satire on the conditions under which they lived.

The officers were quartered in many instances in hotels, schools, barracks, and châteaux taken over for the purpose. They were allowed cooks and orderlies to look after their comfort and were permitted in most camps to take walks outside the prison upon giving their word not to attempt to escape.

The conditions described above were general and there were many exceptions as to living

## Prisoners of the Great War

accommodations and privileges. These were largely affected by the commandant of the camp, who could usually make conditions good or bad at will. Our inspection reports from the neutral delegates and many interviews with returning prisoners enabled us to keep a pretty accurate knowledge of the conditions in camps where Americans were located.

If we were suspicious of a camp we at once arranged for a special visit by a neutral representative. As an illustration, one day two escaped prisoners from Villingen arrived at Berne. They told us that at the time of their attempt to escape ten other Americans also tried to get away. A large number of shots were fired and it was possible and even probable that some had been wounded or killed. It was also possible that others might receive abuse or unreasonable terms of imprisonment for the attempt. We at once arranged a visit by a neutral delegate, and found that none of the men had been killed, wounded, or unduly punished.

In order that the reader may understand the nature of these reports, I am reproducing in the following chapter copies of a few typical



**AMERICAN PRISONERS' BAND AT RASTATT PRISON**



**AMERICAN PRISONERS AT RASTATT PRISON RECEIVING  
THEIR RED CROSS PARCELS**

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[illegible]

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## Living Conditions

reports, and extracts from others, as received by the commission at Berne. These reports contained much useful information and it will be noted that the delegate did not fail to listen to and report the complaints of the prisoners, adjusting the matters directly on the spot with the German camp authorities when possible, and reporting all complaints to us at Berne with the action taken.

These reports also present an excellent picture of camp conditions — sanitary arrangements, religious exercises, and amusements. The report of Tüchel Prison gives the entire menu for one week, as provided by the German Government.

## Chapter VII

### REPORTS BY NEUTRAL DELEGATES

(Translations)

#### INFORMATION CONCERNING THE CAMP OF PRISONERS OF WAR AT TUCHEL BELONGING TO THE XVII<sup>TH</sup> ARMY CORPS

(Visited without previous notice by the Inspector, on the  
13th of April, 1918)

Commander of the Camp: a major-general.  
This camp was visited in the beginning of the  
present year by delegates of the ———.

*Description:* The camp is composed of two completely separate parts, called Camp No. 1 and Camp No. 2, but of these two only the larger one is at present occupied, the other being completely empty. In both of them the construction of the barracks is completely *subterranean*, only the roof being open to the sky and some of the walls, which are protected by a layer of sand. The delegate thought that this peculiar construction of the barracks would make them damp, especially in winter, but the authorities of the camp say that this is not the case, as the sandy nature of the ground makes

## Reports by Neutral Delegates

them more dry, and for this reason, in winter the barracks are much more protected and warmer.

*Population:* The total population of the camp on the day on which we visited it, was 61,840 prisoners of war, of whom only 28,402 live in the camp, the 33,438 remaining prisoners being partitioned for work in the camps where they live.

The nationality and grades of those 28,402 who live in the camp are as follows:

American military prisoners....	33
American civilian prisoners.....	1
Russian military prisoners.....	27,944
Russian civilian prisoners.....	16
Roumanian military prisoners..	366
English civilian prisoners.....	41
Italian civilian prisoners.....	<u>1</u>
Total .....	28,402

As far as concerns the 33,438 prisoners of war who live in the different outposts of work, their nationalities and grades are as follows:

Military Belgians.....	3
Military Russians.....	30,060
Military Roumanians.....	<u>3,375</u>
Total prisoners of war.....	33,438

## Prisoners of the Great War

*Lodging:* As far as possible, the prisoners are lodged in barracks, according to nationality, the Americans having one barrack for themselves. These barracks are of the general form above mentioned, and in the interior are arranged the beds of the prisoners, in two tiers one over the other, one little tablet marking the space which corresponds for each prisoner. Each one of these consists of a sheet and a mattress full of wood-shavings, and two blankets.

The illumination in the barracks is electric and during the day they receive the light as well as ventilation by means of skylights situated in the roofs.

Heating is obtained by large brick stoves placed in the middle of the barrack.

The chief of the barrack sleeps in a small separate room, in which, in addition, two other prisoners sleep.

*Hygienic services:* Water did not seem to be either abundant or good. Judging from what the prisoners say and from what others, such as the Americans, request, as will be seen below. Mineral waters are sold in the canteen.

Washing of clothes in general is done by sev-



7/1



## Reports by Neutral Delegates

eral of the prisoners, who have for this purpose laundries in the camp.

The privies are of the water-closet type, the cleaning of which is done by the prisoners themselves.

The number of showers and baths is considerable, and occupy a large barrack situated in the middle of the camp. The number of baths which the prisoners are accustomed to take is one every ten days, but now the Americans complain that a month has passed without their having a bath, and without knowing when they can take it. The authorities of the camp assert that this is due to the fact of the arrival of Russian prisoners of war taken in Russia a few months ago, which necessitates the occupation of the whole set of baths in order to disinfect them, but as soon as that is accomplished, the baths will be utilized as has been customary hitherto.

*Sanitary services:* The sick are visited daily by the doctors attached to the camp. There are five German and about fifty Russian doctors. The light cases are kept in the infirmary of the camp, but those more seriously ill are kept

## Prisoners of the Great War

in the hospital (of same camp). The general health of the camp appears to be good, although the total sickness had somewhat increased, 2440 in all, of which 2355 were Russians and 85 Roumanians. The diseases were of the usual nature. The dentist is established in the same hospital.

*Diet:* The food is prepared in the camp by the prisoners themselves. The list of meals with the quantity of food of each is written up on a blackboard in the kitchen, and in addition is written on the menu each day. The prisoners complain that the food is scant and meagre, the Americans stating that the basis of their nourishment comes from the packages which they receive. The general appearance of the prisoners is good, but that of the Americans seems rather better. These say that the meals do not please them because they are tasteless, or not made according to their tastes.

The quantity of bread is 285 grs. per diem and per prisoner, the bread being of the usual quality amongst the population.

The evening meal was tasted by the delegate on the day of his visit. It consisted of fish,

## Reports by Neutral Delegates

soup, potatoes, and some grease, and was found to be of good savor, but of very little strength. The midday meal had consisted of a soup of beef, potatoes, beans, and other vegetables.

For more clearness, there is at the end of this report, copy of a list of the meals served during the week of this visit (which is the same during the whole month) with the quantity of each dish corresponding to each prisoner, as it was inscribed on the board in the kitchen.

*Packages:* The Americans complain that the packages which reach them from Switzerland are usually delayed some twenty-one days, and that the few which up to the present they have received from America are delayed between three and four months. The other prisoners cannot make any specific declaration, as the packages they receive are few.

The Americans say that the packages which they have received up to the present were in fairly good state, except five or six which reached them almost empty. The number which they receive is two individual packages per week.

In order to prepare the contents of the pack-

## Prisoners of the Great War

ages, the prisoners have a stove with four openings for each company or group, which up to the present has been sufficient, but should the number of prisoners who receive packages be increased this arrangement would be absolutely insufficient.

*Canteen:* There is one in the camp, but in it are sold only objects of personal use and occasionally some drinks such as lemonade. Also cigarettes, cigars, etc., are sold. The American prisoners request that also mineral water be placed on sale.

*Clothing:* The general aspect of the prisoners is not bad, that of the Americans being the best. These especially wish that they be given boots with leather soles or that these be sent from their country. Their representative in the camp, referring to this point, asked that should these be sent, also leather be sent to repair them, as here no material whatever exists.

*Religious services:* Only the Russians have religious service in the camp, but one is being prepared for the Catholics and for the Protestants, as soon as their number justifies it.

*Help committees:* One exists for each nation-

## Reports by Neutral Delegates

ality which, according to report, worked without difficulty up to the present.

*Recreation:* They may receive and do receive periodicals authorized by the Ministry of War. Although they possess some instruments, they have not yet been able to compose an orchestra. Also there are some books.

The American prisoners make frequent manifestations on this point, which will be touched upon further on.

*Correspondence:* All prisoners may write two letters and four regulation post cards. Those which reach them from France or America are usually one to two months old, from Russia or Roumania some four months old.

*Work:* There is no other except the general work of the camp, which is not paid for. There are also some special employments such as those of shoemaking, which are paid for at thirty pfennigs a day. The American prisoners, up to the present, lend no service except that for the camp.

*Punishments:* There is a barrack reserved for this purpose in which are a great number of cells. The punishments are those usually en-

## Prisoners of the Great War

forced for light offenses with all usual appliances. The medium offenses allow bed and meals one day out of every four, and the remaining days with only blankets and a double ration of bread. Heavier penalties are the same as above, but carried out in darkness. On the day in which the visit took place, one hundred and twenty-eight Russians and one American were in confinement. The former were there on account of disobedience to the general rules of the camp, and the last mentioned on account of a petition from his companions because he sold, according to what they said, his own packages and stole their packages in order to eat them.<sup>1</sup>

*Observations:* There is, in addition to the American prisoners above mentioned, who are all military prisoners, one civilian by the name of Henry C. Emery,<sup>1</sup> taken some twenty days ago in Finland. This man is more in the light of

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Emery is the son of Judge L. A. Emery, of Maine. He was a professor at Bowdoin College and afterwards at Yale, and served as Chairman of the Tariff Commission under President Taft. He was sent on a commercial mission to Russia in 1917 and was captured by the Germans while on his way from that country to America. He was held a prisoner for nearly a year. He was released just before the armistice was signed, and arrived in America in November, 1918.

## Reports by Neutral Delegates

an interne than of a prisoner, and on this account is not subject to the rules of the former, it being believed that very shortly he will be liberated. I was not able to speak to him during the visit, as it happened that he had gone for a walk, accompanied by a German attendant.

*Opinion of the delegate:* Accepting what was said by the German authorities concerning the dampness of the barracks on account of the system of construction and above all because prisoners presented no complaints on this ground, this camp may be accepted. The treatment by the commander and other authorities of the camp of the prisoners seems good. Prisoners presented no complaints on this subject. Except for the barracks where they are independently kept, the treatment of American prisoners is the same as that received by others in this camp.

The American prisoners presented no complaint whatever against personal treatment, declaring themselves satisfied up to the present time with the treatment afforded them by the commander, as well as the other authorities of the camp.

## Prisoners of the Great War

Concerning food, they desire that the Canteen should sell some mineral waters, as they say the water of the camp is not good to drink, and they need more water.

The interview with the prisoners took place in the presence of an official appointed by the Commander of the Camp.

(Sd) .....

.....

.....

*Tuchel, 14th of April, 1918*

There were in the camp of Tuchel 10 Americans, 300 Roumanians, 3800 Russians and 5 Russian children from Kalish.

Under the heading of "Food," the Spanish Embassy report of February 9, 1918, states: "In the kitchen they were given blood sausage, sour cabbage and potatoes. Only twice a week is there a meal with meat. The ration of bread is 285 grs. daily."

"Lodgings" — underground huts.

Under the head of "Canteen," this report states: "The cheapest cigarettes 8 pfg. each. Also pickles at from 20 to 30 pfg. apiece."



# Reports by Neutral Delegates

## CAMP TUCHEL

*Food Board for April, 1918*

Day	Breakfast Unit 8	Dinner Unit 8	Supper Unit 8
Sunday.....	10 coffee substitute 5 sugar 0.010 saccharine	50 beef 400 potatoes 500 "wrucken" 30 mixed flour 25 buckwheat, oats	50 sea-food 200 potatoes 5 grease 3 tea 0.015 saccharine
Monday.....	See Sunday	100 beans 200 potatoes 50 mixed flour 7.5 grease	75 barley 200 potatoes 5 grease
Tuesday.....	See Sunday	125 fish 40 dry vegetables 400 potatoes 50 mixed flour 5 grease 25 mustard substitute	50 semolina 25 sugar 50 marmalade
Wednesday....	See Sunday	50 salt meat 300 sauerkraut 400 potatoes 30 mixed flour 25 buckwheat, oats	50 sea-food 200 potatoes 5 grease 3 tea 0.015 saccharine
Thursday.....	See Sunday	500 "wrucken" 300 potatoes 50 mixed flour 7.5 grease	75 barley 200 potatoes 5 grease
Friday.....	See Sunday	125 fish 40 dry vegetables 400 potatoes 50 mixed flour 5 grease 25 mustard substitute	50 semolina 25 sugar 50 marmalade
Saturday .....	See Sunday	100 meat sausage 300 sauerkraut 400 potatoes 60 mixed flour	100 beans 200 potatoes 5 grease

The quantities above are all expressed in grammes. Subject to alteration.

Under date of April 8, 1918, we were notified by the Spanish Embassy report that all privates and non-commissioned officers with the

## Prisoners of the Great War

American Army taken prisoners on the Western Front would be concentrated at Tüchel after they have been disinfected at the temporary camp.

The commandant of the camp at Tüchel was General V. Koclebreuth. He made the following statement on May 29 to Mr. Hoffmann, the Y.M.C.A. representative: "Though the American prisoners are not my friends, I must tell you that their behavior here in the camp is excellent."

..... June 7, 1918, report No. 32, says:

"To the various questions put by the delegate, the American prisoners made the following statements, — On the 12th of January of the present year, there arrived in the camp at Tüchel 8 American prisoners captured on the 3d of November, 1917, at Lorena, whose names are, — Sergeant Hallyburton, Privates Decker, Gallegher, Grafray, Grimsley, Kendall, Lester and Longhman; that in reality they were very hungry because during the journey from the former camp (Darmstadt) to the actual one where they are now, they received nothing

## Reports by Neutral Delegates

more than German rations, which they say were exceedingly small; that when they arrived they were lined up on the square of the camp where the Major-General commanding the camp addressed them in a German speech, and as a consequence, they understood not a word. Concerning their shoes, they in reality were taken away from the eighteen following prisoners, the 8 above mentioned in the first part of the report and further on those named (their full names will be found in the description which accompanies the previous report of April 13). The American leather boots which they were wearing were taken and in their place, others with wooden soles were given them; they were not allowed to take any clothing; in reality, they were camped for a while (approximately one month) without money of any kind. Sergeant Hallyburton, of the 16th Infantry, F.C., Stony Point, North Carolina, had in his possession frs. 1800, which he changed into marks, and with which he helped his American fellow prisoners until help reached them. When his money was spent, a part was returned to him by these same American com-

## Prisoners of the Great War

panion prisoners. On the 4th of May, the American Red Cross at Berne wrote to them that they were sending them 96 pairs of shoes and other things, and on the arrival of this total invoice, all the shoes except one were missing, — that is to say, of 96 pairs, only one shoe arrived; also the following objects, — 96 cans of corned beef hash, 20 packages of biscuits, 100 pounds of sugar, 8 cans of tomatoes, 32 flannel over-shirts and 31 suits of pajamas; they beg, in view of these repeated losses, an energetic intervention on the part of the Embassy be made in order that such abuses might be corrected, as it occasions a great moral and material loss. Referring to these shoes, the German authorities declare their shoes were taken from them in conformity with an order of the Ministry of War which decrees that this shall be done, that if for any reason they go outside of the camp, the 18 pairs of shoes, which are in the storehouse in the camp, will be returned to them. Referring to the loss of packages, the German authorities declare that all that they can ascertain is that when the packages reached the camp, these objects were missing. The treat-

## Reports by Neutral Delegates

ment of the prisoners by the commandant of the camp appears good and all the assertions of the prisoners on the subject confirm it."

In the name of the American Red Cross I protested, under date of July 9, 1918, through the International Red Cross, against the taking away of shoes from American prisoners of war and substituting wooden shoes; and also against the theft of ninety-five and one half pairs of shoes shipped to the prisoners of war.

Under date of October 11, 1918, the German Minister of War replied to the International Red Cross as follows: "Clothing and uniforms belonging to prisoners of war worn by them at the time of their capture are considered as war booty."

The International Red Cross, in forwarding to the American Red Cross this letter, under date of October 17 stated: "We cannot subscribe to the pretensions of the Imperial Government concerning the clothing and uniforms of prisoners as booty of war. This affirmation is in effect contrary to the fourth article of the Hague Convention which provides that all personal property of prisoners of war, excepting

## Prisoners of the Great War

their arms, their horses, and their military papers, shall remain their property.”

(Translation)

### STUTTGART ZONE — VILLINGEN CAMP

.....  
.. BERLIN  
*American Report*  
No. 63

The following American officers were there on the day of the visit:

Major.....	I
Captains.....	4
Captain Lieutenant (1st Lieutenant)	I
Lieutenants.....	38
Physicians .....	21
Officers of merchant marine.....	<u>5</u>
	70

*Help Committee:* The American Help Committee works regularly and to the satisfaction of the officers.

They desire facilities for storing food and clothing for officers who arrive at the camp and are in need of them, but the places at present at their disposal are not sufficient. The camp authorities state that the storerooms at the dis-



**IN THE PRISON CAMP AT VILLINGEN, GERMANY**

Major Sarda (centre), of the Spanish Artillery, was Official Representative of the United States Government for the Inspection of German Prison Camps.

Major Harry Brown (left), of Milford, Mass., and Major Dirk Bruins (right), U.S. Sanitary Train, were Prisoners of War

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## Reports by Neutral Delegates

posal of the committee are sufficiently large, but such a quantity of shipments are received that they are quite full of parcels and there are no others available.

*Sanitary service:* The German physician visits the camp daily, those who must be placed in a hospital being sent to Offenburg. The health conditions are good, none of the officers being ill at the time of the visit. They stated that there had been an epidemic of grippe during the preceding months in a light form, when the officers remained in their dormitories, there being no infirmary, and these were not afterwards infected. There were no deaths and only one officer had to be taken to the hospital.

*Hygienic services:* Satisfactory to the prisoners with the exception that the floor of one of the toilets had fallen in somewhat and there were unpleasant odors; the toilets are cared for and disinfected with usual frequency. The German authorities stated that they would have the floor of the one complained of repaired at once.

*Food:* In consideration of the rationing of civilians in Germany, the food served in this camp is good.

## Prisoners of the Great War

*Canteens:* There are two, one an ordinary canteen and the other for the sale of various articles, — writing materials, delicacies, cigarettes, and certain foods and drinks. The canteen prices are fixed. The officers consider the prices of the special canteen as high and fixed according to the caprice of the one in charge. Therefore they buy nothing there. The camp authorities contend that the prices are the same as those in the town and vary according to commercial variations, yet are, to a certain extent, regulated by the man in charge.

*Amusements:* They have tennis and football, but find the football field too small and would like to obtain ground farther from the camp for this purpose; would also like to have permission to go out Sunday afternoons to sketch and paint in the neighborhood of the camp. The camp authorities told them that they have sufficient space within the camp grounds for sports and cannot have any other plot of ground outside. They go for a walk once a week; also have a library.

*Religious services:* Asked the German authorities permission to assist at the Catholic and

## Reports by Neutral Delegates

evangelical services of the city churches, as the officers of other nationalities are allowed to do. The camp authorities say that as there is a Catholic and a Protestant service inside the camp for American prisoners once a month they do not need to attend the city churches.

*Correspondence and parcels:* They make no complaint regarding letters, but say that as the service of the camp is not well organized and the storehouses not sufficiently large, the parcels sometimes are not distributed for three days. They usually take a month to come, those sent from Switzerland or their own country arriving in good condition, although those sent from other camps in Germany are usually minus part of their contents. They want the parcel distribution service in the camp reorganized; also would like to know the reasons when a letter is not passed by the censor. The authorities of the camp promised this would be attended to.

*Treatment:* They have no complaint as to the treatment received in the camp, their relations with the authorities being good.

*Punishments:* Lieutenant Vaughan considers

## Prisoners of the Great War

the punishment he received of six days' arrest for having written the word "Boche" in his diary as excessive. The German authorities stated that, as a matter of fact, he was punished because he always used the word "Boche" in referring to Germans in his diary.

The prisoners expressed the following desires:

1. Desire necessary measures be taken to avoid lack of proper heating when the cold weather comes, as happened last winter according to the accounts of Russian officers who were interned in this camp. (*A.*) Last winter the coal was very scarce, but during the coming cold season, they are to receive the same amount as the civilian population and the heating will be better.

2. Ask for more orderlies, since at present there is only one for twenty officers; also that they shall be Americans, if possible, or at least understand English, since there are Russians among their present orderlies who understand neither English nor French, which makes communication with them very difficult. (*A.*) Seven American orderlies are expected who will be used here.

## Reports by Neutral Delegates

3. That the payment of checks may be hastened, since six weeks passed between handing them in at the Kommandantur and the receipt of the money. (A.) They cannot be paid until there is a guarantee that the banks on which they are drawn have the amount in said accounts, since payment has been made and it was afterwards found that the money was not in the banks referred to (this in the case of certain merchant marine officers).

4. Complain that when made prisoners, German soldiers, even officers, took from them watches, rings, shoes, and other private property.

5. In the Karlsruhe Camp, their leather belts, their own property, were confiscated.

6. In the Landshut Camp, Officers Wardell, Meelen, Strong, and Jueker were punished with thirty-one days' arrest for attempt to escape, while French officers only received twenty-eight days for the same offense, and they consider it unjust that American officers should be more harshly punished in the same camp.

The interview with the prisoners took place

## Prisoners of the Great War

in the presence of the official representative of inspection.

The impression of the delegates in regard to this camp is satisfactory, except that they would like to have an infirmary established there.

..... *Physician*

..... *Physician*

.....

*Stuttgart, September 28, 1918*

### VILLINGEN CAMP

(Extract from Report by ..... May 31, 1918)

The general aspect of the American prisoners was good, which is especially due, as they reported, to the packages which they receive from their country.

*Prices in Canteen:* Cigars, 25 to 80 pfg. each; cigarettes from 8 to 10 pfg. each; matches, 8 pfg. a box; pipe tobacco, 90 pfg. a package; sardines, 1.80 a box; olives, 1.10 a box.

### BRANDENBURG CAMP

(Visited October 2, 1918)

There were seventeen Americans in this camp, which has been described in previous re-

## Reports by Neutral Delegates

ports, and seventeen others were distributed in working detachments.

They all belonged to crews of merchant vessels and their names were given the Spanish Embassy after a previous visit. There was but one newcomer, who arrived two months ago: Mr. David Johnson, of the S.S. Atlantic Sun, torpedoed by a submarine.

In conversing with the prisoners I was told that on the 15th of August last they wrote to the Spanish Embassy requesting that a visit be made to them and protesting that the letter had not yet reached its destination.

They protested that Petty Officer, Mr. John Francis Murphy, of the M.S.S. Jacob Jones, was forced to work in the Holzmann Detachment of Doberitz in spite of his rank. The same thing happened to Foreman Walter W. Perkins, of the Esmeralda, who was forced to work on the railways.

Two Americans were working in the Victoria II coal mine in Senftenberg and they complained that the work was very hard. They asked that the delegates at the Berne Conference should be telegraphed to make an arrange-

## Prisoners of the Great War

ment by which American prisoners should not be called upon to do such hard work.

Many complained of the poor parcels service. Out of 720 parcels sent the committee since the 2d of April, 129 were lost or disappeared during transit. Each one weighed sixteen American pounds. Of seven parcels which the committee sent to Mr. Thomas Durfee, who was working in the Juterborg Artillery Depot, only one reached him.

The German sergeant charged with the parcels service has recently been changed and it is hoped that it will, in future, be more satisfactory.

They stated that they wrote to the American Red Cross last March asking for bandages and medicines for stomach troubles, as well as tonics, but nothing of this nature has as yet been received. (Sent but stolen in transit. C.P.D.)

State that they have everything they require and have no need of money or any shipments of a special nature.

The German authorities give them neither soap nor towels.

There is no cinematograph in operation in



## Reports by Neutral Delegates

this camp. The men would like the one installed put in working order, it having been prohibited by the general after the second representation on plea of danger from fire.

State that the German authorities erased two names from the list of American prisoners lodged here, which was sent by the committee to the Spanish Embassy, and added one to it. They protested that the two (?) added by the Germans are not Americans, whereas the one (?) excluded from list is American. The American whose name was excluded is Sam Petrelli; the two added by the Germans who, however, are not Americans, are James Samuels and Sam Judan.

The captain of the Campana, Mr. Alfred Oliver, and Mr. Richardson, chief mate of the Encore, protest that a German sergeant tried to make them draw the cart in which the parcels are taken to the camp, and on their refusing to do so, put them under arrest for three days. They have since received satisfaction, since the sergeant was transferred, but they wish the incident to be communicated to their government.

## Prisoners of the Great War

Mr. Frederick Jacobs, sailor of the Campana, has swollen legs. He is now occupied peeling potatoes, but, when the swelling goes down, they put him on harder tasks, and they begin swelling again.

There are no complaints from other detachments where Americans are working: Brandenburg Railway, 2; Holzmann in Doberitz, 8; and Premnitz Powder Factory, 4.

The commander representing the general of the camp said he would look into the cases of Mr. Murphy and Mr. Perkins and if they really hold the rank they allege they will be relieved of work.

Parcels are not lost in the camp and the responsibility must rest somewhere *en route*, either in Germany or before crossing the frontier. Mr. Durfee's case, only one parcel out of seven being received, will be inquired into and proper proceedings will be taken to place responsibility.

The commander will endeavor to obtain permission from the general for reopening the cinematograph. Will have the physician specify the class of work Mr. Jacobs is to do.

## Reports by Neutral Delegates

*Opinion of the Delegate:* The loss of parcels is so frequent and so great, that he urges energetic measures in regard to this matter, since the service, instead of improving, is becoming worse. It is desirable that a cinematograph be installed in this camp, as is the case in others. These defects corrected, the camp will produce a favorable impression.

.....

*Medical Captain*

*Delegate of .....*

*Brandenburg, October 2, 1918*

### BRANDENBURG CAMP

(Visit of November 1, 1918, by ..... to the  
prison camp at Brandenburg, 3d Army Corps)

There are twenty-eight American prisoners. The lodging of these leaves something to be desired. The action of the weather has depreciated all the huts, the roofs of which present several leaks. This is made all the more noticeable because no coal is provided for heating the place, and each man has only two blankets. They complain that they suffer from the cold and we certify that the temperature of the dormitories

## Prisoners of the Great War

was not comfortable. There was only one light in each hut and the corners not in the immediate vicinity of the lamp are so dark that in order to inspect the beds, it was necessary to light a wax match. They receive no hot water to wash themselves. The prisoners said that the meals were not to their taste and they nourished themselves on the food sent to them.

### MERSEBURG CAMP

#### *American Report*

No. 62

Two electric lights have been placed in each barracks since March 13th and, besides the two already there, a gas jet outside illuminates the interior somewhat.

*Prisoners:* Americans, 7 wounded; French, 2000; Belgians, 21; Portuguese, 25. In the detachments there are also 14,000 French, 300 Belgians, and 173 Portuguese.

*Food:* The biscuits arrive and German bread, of good quality, is also given: 280 grs. In the canteen some vegetables can be bought, at prices a little higher than among the people.

*Health:* There are eighty Frenchmen in the

## Reports by Neutral Delegates

infirmary and two Belgians, who are well cared for by two physicians. There are also three Italian physicians.

*Correspondence:* They are now receiving letters of August 15.

*Parcels:* The prisoners state that the cars in which the parcels arrive from Switzerland, are opened in their presence or in the presence of men designated by them, so that they reach the camp in the same state as they left Switzerland. But the parcels disappear between the camp and the detachments, the chief cause being robbery on the railway, since, in general, the parcels are sent to the station and taken away by the prisoners themselves. When it has been proven that the loss has occurred *en route*, the railway companies indemnify the prisoners.

*Amusements:* They go to church when they like and also have a theatre.

The American prisoners state that until the aid they have asked for arrives, the French assist them, giving them biscuits, and they receive two soups a day in the hospital or infirmary.

According to communication of August 29

## Prisoners of the Great War

from the American Red Cross in Berne, each prisoner should very shortly receive parcels which are *en route*.

The prisoners are satisfied with the camp treatment. The visit occurred in the presence of an official representative of the commandant and an interpreter.

The impression produced by the camp and the state of the prisoners may be considered good.

.....  
Comandante  
Delegate of the .....  
Visited 6/9/18

STRALKOWO CAMP  
FIFTH ARMY CORPS  
(Visited September 23, 1918)

*Effectives:* On the day of the visit there were in this camp:

	759	French prisoners, 19 of
		whom are assistants
	3	Belgians
	14	Serbian
	10	Americans
Total	786	

## Reports by Neutral Delegates

*Health:* Of the ten Americans who are temporarily in this camp, seven recently left the hospital and expect to be sent to another camp. Three are still under treatment but doing well. Two of them are officers.

They have a douche once a week, one thousand prisoners being able to take one daily. There are washing-machines for clothing and sheets, nine laundry machines, two centrifugal dryers, and two electric ironing machines of large dimensions, as well as rinsing coppers. The laundry installation is run by electricity as well as the pumps which supply water to the camp.

There is a medical visit daily.

*Alimentation:* The kitchen has twenty-eight boilers served by twenty-four Russian and three French cooks. The French cooking is done apart from that of the Russians.

They receive three hundred grs. of bread daily and have meat and fish once a week. At other times tinned food. The chief food is barley soup in the morning. At noon, potatoes, with flour and tinned food. In the evening, potatoes, carrots, barley, margarine, and extract

## Prisoners of the Great War

of bone. The prisoners consider the food insufficient.

*Help Committee:* Biscuits are received from the French committee and tinned goods from the English. Two days ago thirty parcels, with clothing, tinned foods, and tobacco were received.

*Mail:* They have been prisoners since July and have received no mail.

*Canteen:* Lemonade is sold at 0.25; cigarettes at 0.42; wine at 2.50 the glass and ten marks a bottle.

*Recreation:* On Sunday they go to a football field and have a cinematograph where they pay fifty centimes.

*Treatment:* Made no complaint.

*Infirmary:* The following prisoners are there:

French.....	204
Belgians .....	1
Serbians .....	4
Americans.....	<u>3</u>
Total .....	212

The American officers and other prisoners made no complaint in regard to the treatment received and had no requests.



## Reports by Neutral Delegates

*General requests:* Corporal Lloyd Gardner, of the CCC 110 Infantry, asks for \$100.00 for the seven companions in the camp.

*General:* The treatment offers nothing to complain of. The food is the same as in most of the camps. The infirmary and other sanitary installations of disinfection, laundry, etc., are good and surgical instruments abundant.

Paper bandages are used, as in all infirmaries, for external use but not for open wounds, for which sterilized gauze is used.

In regard to the sale of bread, the American prisoners gave no information whatsoever, this being done by the French who stated that bread was sold in the camp at twenty marks for a loaf of three pounds of which fact the German authorities were ignorant.

(Sgd)

.....

*Medical Commander*

.....

*Medical Captain*

*Delegates of* .....

*Posen, September 7, 1918*

P.S. The list of prisoners is being awaited to give financial aid.

# Prisoners of the Great War

## SKALMIERSCHUTZ CAMP

### FIFTH ARMY CORPS

(Visited September 25, 1918)

No. 58

There are ten Americans in this camp, who were taken prisoners during June and July and transported from the front to the Skalmierschutz Hospital for attendance. When cured they were put in the camp, where they are at present awaiting transfer to another place. They are lodged in one of the barracks of the Russian block.

*Health conditions:* There is no one in the hospital. The medical service is carried on by German and Russian physicians. In the infirmary there are appliances for urgency cases and also a dentist.

*Alimentation:* They receive 300 grs. of bread daily. Meat: 100 grs. a week, and 150 tinned. Fish: 250 grs. Marmalade: 200 grs.; potatoes 3950 grs., and 50 grs. of margarine.

*Correspondence:* They have received no letters.

*Lodging:* In a semi-subterranean barrack with front windows and skylights. Beds hastily constructed of boards and placed along the

## Reports by Neutral Delegates

walls, raised above the floor. Straw mattress and pillow and one cover during the present season. Heating in winter by means of coal stoves and ovens. There is no artificial light. Collective cooking done by Germans and Russians. Bath, disinfection, and laundry service.

*Canteen:* Assorted: cigarettes with variable prices, fixed by the authorities, lemonade and various articles.

*Religious service:* Catholic and Protestant each fortnight.

*Amusements:* Walks, sports, library, cinematograph.

*Work:* None.

*Punishments:* There have been none. No complaint has been made in regard to the treatment of the authorities. The French committee has been helping them with bread and other food. Have received no parcels from home.

*Wishes and complaints of general character:* They require clothing and towels. If transferred to another camp they would like to be put with the French. Nine of the prisoners would like to have \$10.00 each.

## Prisoners of the Great War

*Impression of the delegates:* The impression obtained from the visit is good, with the exception of that produced by the barracks where they are lodged, and the Commander of the Camp stated that they were to be transferred to another as soon as it was finished.

(Sgd)

.....

*Medical Captain*

.....

*Medical Commander*

*Delegates of* .....

*Posen, September 27, 1918*

P.S. The list of the prisoners is expected, when financial aid will be given them.

(Extracts from ..... Report on Skalmierschutz  
Camp, 5th Army Corps, visited September 25, 1918)

There are ten Americans in this camp. They are lodged in one of the barracks of the Russian block.

They receive 300 grs. of bread daily; meat, 100 grs. a week and 150 tinned; fish, 250 grs.; marmalade, 200 grs.; potatoes, 3950 grs., and 50 grs. of margarine.

They have received no letters.

## Reports by Neutral Delegates

Lodging in a subterranean barrack with front windows and skylights. Beds hastily constructed of boards and placed along the walls, raised above the floor. Straw mattresses and pillow and one cover during the present season.

American prisoners require clothing and towels.

(Extracts from ..... Report, September 18, date of visit, 17th Army Corps, Schutzlazarett Hospital. Date of report September 28, 1918)

On day of visit, following prisoners: French, 11 officers and 219 privates; Belgian, 4 privates; American, 1 private.

The officers are suffering from wounds received in the war and most of the soldiers from surgical operations and inflammation; some with internal affections.

They receive 400 grs. of bread a day, 500 grs. daily of potatoes, and 300 grs. of meat weekly. The meals have vegetable basis and are not sufficiently nutritious. The food for the day consisted of carrots, wheat grains mixed with flour. On being tried, it proved to be badly cooked, and not nourishing. The officers would like to see the food of the soldiers improved.

## Prisoners of the Great War

Mail is very irregular, both for letters and parcels.

The rooms for the soldiers are well lighted, but with poor ventilation.

There is no complaint except of the food which the prisoners consider insufficient and badly cooked.

They want more water taps with running water, for toilet and laundry purposes, but the authorities consider those at present existing as sufficient.

They ask for better food and also permission to make the coffins for their comrades who die.

## Chapter VIII

### ESCAPES

VERY naturally, attempts were constantly made by prisoners of war to escape from the German prison camps, and most of those who were successful made for the Swiss frontier. At one period an average of two prisoners a day crossed the line, and many interesting stories were told by these men, some of a very thrilling character.

The first American prisoner to escape into Switzerland from a German prison camp was an aviator named Everett Buckley, of Chicago. Buckley was my guest for several days and personally told me the story of his remarkable escape. I am repeating it here in his own words:

"I was attached to the French Escadrille N-65. During an early combat, I was shot down, my plane being damaged, and landed on Dun-sur-Meuse on September 6, 1917. My machine was upset and when it struck the ground, I was at first a little stunned. However, I tried to follow my orders, that if I ever

## Prisoners of the Great War

landed in enemy territory, I must immediately burn my machine and destroy my leather boots, both of these being valuable to the German military forces. While endeavoring to carry out these orders, I was knocked down by a crowd that had gathered. I was being pretty roughly used when a German military officer rode into the crowd on horseback, slashing right and left with his sabre and seriously injuring several Germans. There is no question in my mind that I owe my life to this officer's intervention, as the Germans at that time were very bitter about the aeroplanes that were beginning to drop bombs in their country. They were very much afraid of this kind of warfare, the example for which they themselves had set. In saving me, however, I hardly think the officer was actuated by any humane motives, but rather wanted to use me as a possible source of military information. Although as a result of this experience I was badly bruised, I was not severely wounded, and I was never seen by a doctor.

"I was walked to a small village and taken to an old house where I was questioned by Ger-





**EVERETT BUCKLEY**

**The first American prisoner to escape into Switzerland. He was  
enlisted with the French**

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## Escapes

man officers. From there I was taken to the fortress of Montmédy where I was kept in a cell for eighteen days, alone most of the time, and fed exclusively on bread and water. After being in this fortress for some hours, I was desperate for a cigarette. Somehow or other, I had managed to retain my leather belt, and motioning to the guard, offered it to him in exchange for a cigarette. I passed the belt to him through the bars of my cell. The guard took it and spat in my face in return.

“After eighteen days’ confinement in this fortress, I was taken to the so-called ‘Microphone hotel’ at Karlsruhe. At that time I had no knowledge of this hotel, but it has since become famous and is now well known to the various captured officers and aviators. Here I was placed in a room and given supper with several other Allied officers, English and French. In running my hand underneath the table at supper, I found a card pinned there on which was written: ‘Be careful, there is a dictaphone in the lamp.’ Over the centre table was a large hanging lamp, and upon investigation, a dictaphone was discovered. It seems that the

## Prisoners of the Great War

German idea is to obtain military information by placing Allied officers together in this room soon after their capture, giving them a good meal, in the expectation that during the meal, they would exchange experiences and discuss matters which might yield valuable military information as to the location of military units.

“At the end of five days, I was taken to the prison camp near Karlsruhe. It is an officers’ camp and I stayed there six weeks. Although I was not physically ill-treated, I was insulted, sneered at and constantly called all sorts of names, on account of my being an American volunteer. I was told that I had no business in the war and had better be dead. This was said to me by a German officer through an interpreter.

“From Karlsruhe I was sent to Heuberg, at the head of the Black Forest, where I remained in a camp for two months. I escaped from this camp by breaking through the fence. I managed to reach the frontier, but was caught just as I was going over. They sent me back to Heuberg where I was threatened several times with a bayonet because I refused to do road-making

## Escapes

in an artillery fort. The presence of other prisoners at the time was the only thing that saved my life.

“The next place to which I was sent was Donaueschingen, where I was put to work on a farm. After two days, I escaped from a field. I ran about five kilometres when I came to the Danube and was unable to cross. Once more they caught me and sent me back to Heuberg. I was placed in prison for thirty-one days, where I was given two hundred grammes of bread a day, with water, and a plate of soup every fifth day. They permitted me to go out and wash and get my drinking-water. At the termination of my prison sentence, I stayed ten days in the camp at Heuberg and was then sent to Varingenstadt on a farm. I remained there one day. That night I cut the bars out of a window and escaped with seven other prisoners. Although I managed to get as far as Bolhlege, I was again caught by a sentry and sent back to Heuberg, which meant another thirty-one days in prison as before.

“Having completed my sentence, I was sent back to Varingenstadt and placed on another

## Prisoners of the Great War

farm. It was here that I received much ill-treatment. I said that I was ill, and made out I was more ill than I really was, because I had in mind to attempt another escape. I requested to see a doctor. They sent for the sentry who came and called me every name he could think of, the doctor being in a village twelve kilometres away. As the sentry did not care to walk this distance, he refused to let me go, but I insisted and finally the guard started out with me. The minute he got me outside of the first village, the guard began kicking me and knocked me down three times with the butt of his rifle. In fact, the guard literally kicked me the whole twelve kilometres.

“To spare themselves the effort of actually kicking, the guards have devised an ingenious method. They hang the rifle by the strap over the shoulder with the butt down, hanging between the thigh and the knee. They then walk behind the prisoner and from time to time throw the butt violently forward, which administers a severe blow to the unfortunate prisoner. When we reached the village, the guard saw the doctor first and evidently told

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him things about me because when I entered, I was not examined, but sent back immediately. All the way back to the camp, the sentry ill-treated me in the same manner as he did coming out. When we got back to the barracks, he again came in to see me but was evidently afraid to come alone; he brought a civilian with him and they both kicked me and knocked me down several times. I was kept in the barracks about two hours, and when the rest of the French prisoners came back, they made a complaint to the Burgomaster of the village. One Frenchman who was ill saw the sentry kick me. The sentinel told the Burgomaster that I was a liar and that he had never touched me. I then made a complaint and sent it to the Commander of the Camp at Heuberg, but never heard anything of it.

"In July, 1918, I was sent on a working Kommando into a hayfield. On the edge of the field there was a wooded hill, with the timber running down to the field. About three o'clock one afternoon, I saw an opportunity to escape. I gradually edged over to the wooded hill, and at an opportune moment, dropped my pitch-

## Prisoners of the Great War

fork and made a dash for the woods. My escape was discovered immediately and about twenty people joined in the chase. The guards were very much surprised and shot wild, which enabled me to reach cover safely. There I hid until things had quieted down a bit. Knowing that dogs would be used to follow my trail, I secured some wild garlic and thoroughly rubbed my boots with it. I then walked for six nights with nothing to eat but raw potatoes. I had previously provided myself with a map and a compass, which I had secreted on my person, and set my course for the Swiss frontier some seventy-five miles distant. I hid in the daytime and traveled only at night.

"On the morning of July 27 (1918), I arrived near the Swiss border. Here I found three lines of guards stationed, and patrols with dogs passing up and down between them. I crawled out into a wheat-field and carefully studied the situation all day long, preparing my course and plans to pass between the guards that night. Fortunately, it rained very hard at night and it was very dark. At half-past ten, I began my painful journey, crawling on my stomach. I



## Escapes

tied my shoes about my neck so they would not scrape on any object, stuffed my handkerchief in my mouth so the dogs would not hear me breathe, and rubbed myself thoroughly with wild garlic so the dogs would not smell me. These preliminaries over, I wriggled along slowly and painfully until I saw the dim outline of the first sentry. I then worked away from this sentry to a point where I could pass by him, and then wriggled along until I came in sight of the second sentry. By following this plan, I succeeded in getting by all three sentries. I then walked until I came to a signboard and found that I was at Ramsen in Switzerland. The first people I met were two musicians. They took me to the military police where I was questioned. The police then took me to a train at Stein and I changed for Schaffhausen. During the trip, I had worn my clothes almost entirely off below the waist. At Schaffhausen a French Swiss gave me a rough suit of clothes, a pair of shoes, a cap, dinner, and bed. I arrived in Berne on July 28. The American Red Cross at Berne fitted me out with new clothing and gave me money. I then returned to France."

## Prisoners of the Great War

The second prisoner to escape was Thomas Hitchcock, Jr., of New York.

Hitchcock was an American attached to a French flying corps. He had been saving up food in anticipation of an attempt to escape. When being transferred from Lechfeld to a new prison camp, he and two other aviators were put in charge of an old German guard during the journey. They were traveling in an ordinary passenger coach, and each had his personal belongings in a haversack. As they drew into the station at Ulm, the German guard was examining a railroad map. Hitchcock had a compass in his possession, but did not have the map which was so essential to a successful escape. The German guard could not understand English. Hitchcock told his companions to pretend to be asleep, and he did the same, and in a few moments the German guard dozed off. Reaching over very quietly, Hitchcock took the railroad map from the guard. When the train was leaving the station at Ulm, the guard reached for his map and, of course, found it missing. Realizing that his opportunity was then or never, Hitchcock arose, opened



**THOMAS HITCHCOCK, JR.**  
As he appeared on his escape from Germany

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the door of the coach and jumped out. The train had already started to pull out of the station and Hitchcock rushed into the bushes by the railroad track. The German guards did not dare to run after him on account of the other two prisoners who were under his care. He cried out, but the train continued to move and was soon out of sight.

From that on, Hitchcock had a remarkably easy escape. He walked approximately seventy miles out of Germany, and during the entire journey never saw but one German soldier. He slept during the day and walked at night, following his map and compass. It was not easy to tell when he crossed the border, but he finally found a sign-post, and when he realized that he was in Switzerland, he said that he fell on his knees and thanked God.

Hitchcock was fitted out at the American Red Cross stores, spent several days in Berne, and then returned to France.

One of the most sensational escapes was that of Lieutenant Pilot Harold Willis, of Newton, Massachusetts, and Lieutenant Edouard

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## Escapes

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Victor M. Isaacs, U.S.N., of Portsmouth, Virginia.

Lieutenant Willis was born on February 9, 1890, and early in the war enlisted in the American Ambulance Service at the front with the French Army. Later, he joined the famous "Lafayette Escadrille," and achieved some notable aerial victories. While flying a Spad monoplane, a chase machine, he was shot down on August 18, 1917. The American Red Cross at Berne was advised in September that Willis was a prisoner at Karlsruhe. Later, he was alternately reported at Landshut, Gütersloh, Eutin, Bad Stuer, and finally at Villingen.

Lieutenant Isaacs was born on December 18, 1891. He was assigned to the U.S.S. President Lincoln and was on that ship when it was torpedoed on May 31, 1918, off the French coast. For several days he lived on the submarine and was later in the prison camps at Karlsruhe and Villingen.

Upon arriving at Berne after his sensational escape from Camp Villingen, Lieutenant Willis told the American Red Cross the experiences of Lieutenant Isaacs and himself,



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and his account is given below in his own words:

"When I was shot down at Dun on the Meuse, I was taken by German aviation officers to their quarters where I was given breakfast. I was glad to have fallen into the hands of aviation officers, for German infantry maltreat captured aviators whenever they have the opportunity.

"Later I was taken to the fortress of Montmédy where I was imprisoned for three weeks with other French officers. We were under the constant surveillance of German spies who posed as French prisoners. We had been warned not to talk, however, by other French officers.

"From Montmédy I was taken to the famous 'Microphone hotel' at Karlsruhe. We had often heard of this hotel in the Lafayette Escadrille and so did little talking of military matters, knowing that every word was being transmitted by dictaphones to German listeners.

"French and British officers were put in the same room with me in order that we might talk together, but we were all 'wise' and talked about everything except the war. Underneath

## Prisoners of the Great War

the tables in these rooms we found notices in all languages from other prisoners who had been placed in the rooms warning us of the presence of dictaphones.

“Lieutenant Savage, a French officer, found two microphones underneath the wall-paper in the room in which we were confined. He pulled the microphones out, wire and all. Immediately the listeners came rushing in in a furious rage. Lieutenant Savage was severely punished.

“Next, I was sent to the aviation distribution camp at Landshut, Bavaria. There I was subjected to a very severe search. My skin, mouth, ears, and hair were minutely examined. Acids were poured on my body to bring out suspected secret communications in invisible ink. My shoes and clothing were taken to pieces. Even the Croix de Guerre on my tunic was ripped off. A map and compass which I had were taken away from me.

“At Landshut I was quarantined for a month and inoculated against cholera, typhoid and scarlet fever. There I was visited by an alleged Luxembourg count who claimed to represent the Red Cross. He offered to lend me

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money and evinced an unusual curiosity about the front. We had received warning about him while still fighting with the Lafayette Escadrille, and when he called, laughed in his face.

"After my stay at Landshut, I was sent to Gütersloh, which is about one hundred kilometres from the Dutch frontier. During my stay in Bavaria, I observed that all the German states do not suffer the same privations. At Gütersloh we were reasonably well fed and had meat, enough bread and, in addition, beer.

"I was the first American to arrive at Gütersloh where there were about six hundred French and twelve hundred Russians. Every one was very kind to me and gave me food and clothing. The clothing I badly needed at the time. My stay at Gütersloh was the pleasantest in any of the many prison camps where I was imprisoned.

"We had a Rugby team, a good hockey team, a French theatre, university study courses, moving pictures every night and games of all sorts. This treatment was too good to last. Suddenly all the French were ordered to leave the camp *en masse*. As I was in the

## Prisoners of the Great War

French Army I was removed with them. We were taken to a military caserne at Eutin, Holstein, north of Lübeck.

"This camp was commanded by the most brutal type of Prussian officers. Our exercise was limited to half the courtyard of the caserne. We were crowded into rooms without electric light or illumination and where there was no provision for cooking our own food. The food supplied by the Germans was uneatable with the exception of the potatoes. To cap our misery, the parcels which we had been receiving from France were stopped early in December.

"My chum and myself saved up a tin of corned beef during the whole month of December in order that we might have a good Christmas dinner. At the beginning of the new year, things became worse. The full reprisal programme was enforced. All water was cut off at 9 A.M. and we were permitted to have a fire for only two hours daily. The number of officers in a room was doubled and beds were superimposed in three tiers. Study classes, music, and athletics were forbidden. The electric lights which they had given us in the first weeks of January

## Escapes

were extinguished at 8 P.M. and we were forced to go to bed at that hour. We were not permitted to walk in the corridors and were confined in our overcrowded rooms under conditions which would not be permitted in prisons in America.

"We at once commenced making plans to escape. We made all arrangements for short-circuiting the electric lights and during the day spent our time copying maps. In February, enough parcels came so that we could save up enough food for our trip. We made our attempt to escape in the middle of March.

"Twelve French officers volunteered to help us out by putting the electric light system out of order and by distracting the guards. We also made false keys to the doors going out of our building and made metal keys from plaster moulds. We also made ladders to climb over the first wall and wire-cutters to cut the outer barbed wire.

"The night of the attempt to escape came. We got out of the buildings unobserved by the inner guards and grouped ourselves behind the first wall. At a given signal, the powerful light-

## Prisoners of the Great War

ing system was put out of commission as planned. One of the men of the escaping team had shown himself to the exterior guard a second before the lights were put out in time to give the alarm, so that when we arrived at the outer barbed wire and started to cut through with our wire clippers, the guards were ready for us. Three of the team were captured and disappeared. We did not see them again. Three others succeeded in getting out, but were recaptured and brought back to our building.

“Shortly after this disappointment, thanks to the intervention of the American Government through the Spanish Embassy, I was sent to the small camp of Bad Stuer in Mecklenburg. Here General Fivé of the Belgian Army, 120 Russian officers, and myself shared accommodations.

“At this camp were a number of Roumanian officers who, soon after their brave country entered the war on the side of the Allies, deserted to the Germans. There were a few other Roumanian officers in the camp and these treated the German-Roumanians with the scorn they deserved. When Roumania was so unfortu-

## Escapes

nately forced to drop out of the war, the grief of these patriotic Roumanian officers was pitiable.

“The pro-German Roumanians, however, began spying and reporting on all our movements and conversations. Their conduct became so arrogant that General Fivé, aged as he is, challenged them one after the other to duels. Not one of them accepted. Cowards that they were, they reported to the German commandant that General Fivé had threatened their lives. I think the German commandant secretly rather loathed these renegades and that perhaps he unofficially admired old General Fivé.

“At Bad Stuer, conditions were much less rigorous than at other German prison camps. In fact, they were quite exceptional. We were allowed to walk where we wished in the morning and evening as well as to take a plunge in the lake in front of the camp before breakfast, and in the middle of the afternoon. In June, we were permitted to buy fishing licenses and to fish in the evening in the lake. We gave our word of honor that we would not try to escape.

## Prisoners of the Great War

The camp was an old summer hotel and was quite tolerable.

"On July 1, we were given two hours' notice to pack up for the prison camp at Villingen. We traveled first-class and were even permitted to talk to German civilians on the train. That was when Germany was winning. At the end of the first day's journey, we were locked up in the dungeon of the fortress of Magdeburg. The second night we spent in the old fortress of Marienburg above the city of Würzburg.

"Finally we reached Villingen. Imagine my delight in seeing Americans again after being deprived of American news or American gossip after more than a year in prison camps with soldiers of other nationalities. At the time I arrived at Villingen, there were only two or three militia officers and a few American doctors captured with the British troops. Compared with other officers' camps which I have been in and heard about while in Germany, Villingen ranks decidedly low. We were confined in a small sort of pen of huts where one could not see out. The barracks in which we were confined surrounded an inner pen.



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"The sanitary conditions are indescribable at Villingen. I cannot emphasize this point too much. Villingen is a synonym for filth. The whole camp is alive with fleas and vermin of all sorts. Even the German commandant's office is infested with crawlers. All the bug powder, the disinfectant sprinkled about, seemed to have no effect. The Russian soldiers there lived under indescribable conditions. The conditions from a sanitary standpoint were the worst I have ever seen.

"When the so-called Spanish grippe broke out among the Russian soldiers, it instantly spread to the Americans. The well slept in beds two feet from the sick. No attempt at isolation was made by the German authorities. Thanks to the good physical condition of the Americans and to the solid, upbuilding food we received regularly from the American Red Cross packing-houses at Berne, Switzerland, we Americans pulled through the plague without any deaths among us. The Russians were hard hit and suffered much. Two died in a room next to us.

"The Commander of the Camp was a per-

## Prisoners of the Great War

fect type of Prussian colonel, who, although not actually malicious, believed in the iron fist in every sense of the word. He absolutely refused to take the responsibility for the slightest improvement in sanitary conditions or to grant the slightest request which might have made life easier for us. When forced by orders from his superiors to grant us certain concessions, he did so with reluctance.

"However, there were certain bright features in our life. The arrival of the American Red Cross food boxes from Berne was an event. Invariably cheers broke out when they arrived, and this cheering used to make the guards somewhat nervous, especially those outside the camp who perhaps did not know what it was all about.

"The Y.M.C.A. did splendid work to help us. The 'Y' sent us a wonderful assortment of books of all sorts. The books have been catalogued and are well looked after. The grammars were much appreciated by the men, and the way the light and serious literature had been chosen called forth much favorable comment.

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"In addition, the 'Y' sent us sporting goods of all sorts. These sporting goods meant a tremendous lot to us. The camp at Villingen is so small that the boys cannot play indoor baseball or football, but we got along passably with basket-ball and volley-ball. Teams were playing these two games all day long.

"In addition, there were a couple of pianos in the camp, and a mandolin. Some of the boys were taking German lessons, and the Russian officers gave lessons in French. Some of the American doctors were able to procure works on professional subjects and made profitable use of their time.

"The camp at Villingen, though badly arranged, is in a delightful situation on the edge of the Schwarzwald. During the summer we were able to buy salad, onions, beans, and fresh vegetables of all sorts. This would have been impossible in a North German camp.

"One of the amusing features of camp life at Villingen was the presence there of five or six old sea skippers who were taken off sailing boats in mid-Pacific and from as far south as New Zealand by the German raider Wolf. These

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old boys were great yarn spinners and kept the boys roaring with laughter at their quaint expressions and tall stories. I don't know what we would have done without them to cheer us up. Old 'Dad Moore' was the only one who got grumpy. Dad said the other old salts had nothing to complain of as far as food and clothes are concerned, as the Red Cross was taking care of them. They all spend their time playing pinochle and peg-in-the-board.

"From the moment I arrived at Villingen, I planned to escape. We found a place at one end of the pen which was weak and had been overlooked. So we accordingly made our ladders and other implements to escape. The news that we intended to escape got out, however. We suspected that several Bolsheviki Russians in the camp overheard others talking about our plans and revealed them to the guards. The day before we escaped, the interior guard was doubled permanently and a new wire fence was constructed at the place we intended to utilize.

"Next Lieutenant Isaacs and I planned to escape on a technicality in our word-of-honor pass-book. Upon going for a walk around the

## Escapes

camp we were made to sign a pass-book giving our word that we would not escape. To do so after having given one's word meant death before a firing squad.

"With a microscope and smuggled ink, we altered the wording of our books and of the seal which we made to read: 'We intend to escape. We do not give our word of honor.' We planned to sign this forged book and to escape, but before we could utilize the idea, a Russian officer forestalled us and escaped two days before we planned to do so.

"Next we attempted to break jail by making false keys and to open doors which would put us in between the inner and outer defenses. We tried to make a plaster cast and to cast some brass keys, but the experiment was a failure.

"On October 5, Lieutenant Isaacs, who was the ringleader in all these attempts to escape, said: 'We've got to get out to-morrow night. The new moon will soon be up. Everybody get ready.'

"Accordingly, Lieutenant Isaacs made a bridge and cut the bars of his windows. The bridge, which was twenty feet long, was to be

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placed over all the barbed wire and ditches. It was made out of wood one inch thick by two inches wide. How the men later crossed that frail bridge without cracking it, I'm sure I don't know, as it was entirely unsupported.

"Another team planned to go out of a window and to cut a way through the outer wire with wire-cutters. A third team, which included George Puryear, who succeeded in getting through to Switzerland with Lieutenant Isaacs and myself, was to go out of a window on the same side with a ladder over the wire.

"The fourth team, including myself, was to cut out of the camp into a separate enclosure within the camp occupied by the German guards. When the German guards rushed out, the men, who had made themselves wooden guns painted black, and German caps with the two familiar little buttons, were to join them in the rush through the main gate.

"The fifth team, which had no hope of escape, was to take care of the short-circuiting of all lights by means of chains and weights. These men made a very careful study of each wire in order to kill each individual circuit. We

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tried to have two men to each of these two chains to be sure that each circuit would be put out of commission. These 'circuit men' acted on a signal from the director or chief who gave the signal when all the sentries were in the most favorable positions.

"A sixth team, which also had no hope of escaping, was to attract the side sentries out of the way. This team, which was composed of Russian officers of the old Russian Army, gave us every possible aid. They collected tin cans and filled them with stones which they were to throw about in big bags while the general breakout was in progress.

"At the 'zero hour' everything was ready and every one was in his place. At a given signal all the lights went out except one which flickered on account of the swinging of the chain and weights. Finally all the lights went out. The first three teams jumped from the windows and went across the bridges thrown across the wire and ditches.

"There were four sentries to deal with on each of the long sides of the pen, and two sentries on the short sides, making twelve sentries

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in all. As soon as our four teams poured out, these sentries began firing at the men. How many men were hit I do not know. The sentries, who were mostly middle-aged men, were as excited as we were.

"Our party hid behind a small barracks at the end of the barracks in which the reserve guards were sleeping. I worked feverishly to cut the wire leading into the compound occupied by the guards and which was separated from our inner pen by an enclosure fence.

"The guard on watch inside the camp rushed out as soon as the alarm was given, and the sleeping guards inside the barracks near us were called out by an under-officer. 'Heraus! Heraus!' he shouted. That was our signal. As the guards poured out of their sleeping barracks, we joined right in with them, our wooden guns and faked German caps and overcoats preventing us from being detected.

"As we got to the main gate there was a painful pause while the gate was being unlocked. Fortunately the guards were so excited that they did not pay much attention to us. One of the guards was so excited that



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he kept loading and firing his gun into the air.

"I was the first man through the hole I had cut in the wire and remained at the main gate ahead of the sleeping guards. A small kerosene lamp lighted up the spot, but the guard there was so busy loading and firing his rifle that he did not even turn around to look at me. I waited there perhaps fifteen or twenty seconds before the guard came out and unlocked the gate.

"With the guards I rushed around to the southwest side of the barracks where three teams of our men were escaping. But as we ran, I edged off more and more into the darkness. An under-officer saw me edging off and shouted something at me. When he shouted again, I dropped all pretense, let my gun fall and ran off at top speed.

"The squad began shooting at me then, but their aim was poor. I had a hard run uphill and was much distressed by the time I got to the top of the hill. My speed was n't very great for my heavy prison shoes were loaded with mud and each seemed as if it weighed ten pounds.

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“Lieutenant Isaacs and I had arranged to meet at one of three rendezvous which we had selected. I kept along through the fields and along the edge of the woods avoiding all roads and houses. I came to our first rendezvous. No Lieutenant Isaacs. ‘He did n’t get away,’ I thought.

“I kept on in the path we had chosen, however, and soon I heard some one shouting. I dropped instantly into the bushes thinking it might be a guard. We had agreed to call out our names to each other, and when Isaacs shouted again, I jumped up and grabbed him. We sure were delighted to meet each other.

“Instantly we set off at a jog-trot together. We made twenty kilometres that night. Next to the prison camp was a barracks containing a battalion of soldiers. We knew that these soldiers would be sent out in all directions looking for us. We saw automobiles cruising up and down the roads with their lamps flashing off into the fields, and bicycle lights bobbing up and down in the distance. We kept off the roads, knowing that automobiles would be sent

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ahead and guards dropped at all cross-roads to intercept us.

“At various points on our trail, we dropped pepper to throw the prison camp dogs off our course. The first day of our journey across Germany was spent in a dense thicket close to a town. We were worried almost frantic by groups of children who roamed through the woods looking for nuts and gathering firewood. All during our trip we worried ourselves gray over the children who swarmed in all the country districts of Germany and who would have been delighted to turn us over instantly to the authorities.

“The next night we continued. We got bogged in a swamp and spent an hour getting out. We were covered with mud and wet to the skin when we finally dragged ourselves out. We crossed no bridges, but waded and swam every stream, drying ourselves out in the sun next day. For the greater part of the journey we had good maps and did not lose our route.

“The second night we made twenty miles at least. We crossed ravine after ravine in the Schwarzwald valley. We saw no one that

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night. The next day it rained, so we made ourselves a bed of pine boughs and covered ourselves over with my thin rubber raincoat. We hugged each other to keep warm. People were working about us in the woods near by. We could hear them as they crackled through the brush, but we were buried deep under our pine boughs and they did not find us.

"Toward night it got so cold that we made an early start. We struck another deep mountain valley and passed many houses with lights in them. During the early morning hours as we were going west instead of south, we got into a country of which we had no detail maps.

"We struck a road which ended in the woods. We tried to find the continuation of the road and walked around in a circle. Finally we retraced our steps. We lost two hours that night. Toward dawn we passed a fine vegetable garden belonging to an old monastery. We took two fine heads of cabbage which certainly were most welcome.

"We now struck the most mountainous part of the Schwarzwald, and were not far from St. Blassen. That day was a most miserable one.

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Children hunting for nuts and firewood again bothered the life out of us. However, we made a hut of fir branches and kept out of sight.

"The fourth night we were completely off the detail map and were obliged to navigate by compass and an unreliable map. In that district of the Schwarzwald, there are very deep and narrow valleys. Along the bottom of the valleys are rows of houses and on the plateau on the hilltops are other villages running along the crest.

"To have walked in the valleys would have meant much less work and less climbing up and down through thick brush and obstructions of all sorts, but we could not chance detection. We also avoided the high plateaus for the same reason and kept halfway up the slopes of the mountains where the going was terribly difficult but safer.

"How many mountain streams we crossed I don't know. We were continually wet through and ran to keep warm. Several times we met people. Once we came across a couple who sprang up in alarm and ran at top speed when they saw us. Lone pedestrians avoided us. One

## Prisoners of the Great War

man grunted as he passed, but others went by without speaking, which is unusual in the rural districts of Germany.

"We usually dropped down for an hour's nap early in the morning when dawn came. We found that a cake of chocolate had enough heating properties to enable us to sleep for about an hour or an hour and a half without being awakened by the cold. During the day we would doze after having spent part of the morning or afternoon drying our clothes.

"The country was now almost impassable. Our food was running low and we lived principally on raw potatoes, turnips, and carrots which were very welcome indeed. We feared that we would strike the country adjacent to the Rhine without knowing it. We had no maps now, so went very carefully. We made one miscalculation which took us away from the Rhine, but finally we heard trains going along in the distance and were sure that we were near the Rhine valley (?).

"In the early morning fog, we were able to creep out through a neck of the woods into a thicket which lay not more than a kilometre

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from the river. We went on into the last bush and lay there hidden most of that day observing the frontier.

"We were so close to a path that we could hear the conversation of passers-by. In the middle of the day a countryman pushed his way through the bushes and saw Lieutenant Isaacs. As Isaacs was wearing a German soldier's cap, the farmer did not appear to be startled, evidently taking Isaacs for a frontier guard in hiding for some one.

"However, the encounter gave us cold chills and we made our way back into the deepest part of the woods where we waited until night. That evening we ate our last piece of sausage and our last cake of chocolate. We made quite a ceremony out of that last meal.

"At ten o'clock that night a heavy fog came up over the river. Isaacs and I had thrown away our shoes and all our clothing except our trousers. Our extra pair of gray socks we put over our hands so that they would not be so conspicuously white. We fastened our money and papers with strings around our necks. Before leaving our hiding place, we greased our

## Prisoners of the Great War

bodies with lard which we had saved for that purpose.

"Crawling on our hands and knees, we finally reached the Rhine without incident. We found it difficult to cross the railroad tracks without making any noise as the rock ballast shifted and started to run with each step. We got across the railroad, however, just in time to miss a guard who walked up the railroad.

"We crawled along a high stone wall or embankment on the edge of the Rhine for hundreds of yards without finding a place where we could let ourselves down into the river. We could hear the guard below along the riverbank walking up and down.

"We did not know it at the time, but we were sixty feet up above the narrow road which ran along the river edge at that point. Several times I lowered Lieutenant Isaacs over the edge of the wall to see if he could 'touch bottom.' We could see only a few feet through the fog. If he had dropped, he would have been badly injured if not killed.

"We found the wall to be perfectly perpendicular all along its length, and as we contin-



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ued eastward we found that it was becoming higher and higher. Finally we decided to make a long *détour* inland and to travel along the railroad tracks to arrive at a point where our observations of the afternoon had led us to believe that there might be a break in the embankment.

"We crawled back through the wet grass on our hands and knees. Several times we were stopped by walls, buildings, and perpendicular walls enclosing gullies, but finally we reached the point aimed at. I started to crawl through some dead blackberry bushes which cracked ominously. Instantly a guard threw his torch all around. He fussed about for five minutes but fortunately did not throw its rays on us hiding in the bushes.

"It was a close shave and we breathed hard after that. However, the incident gave us the location of the guard. We made a *détour* of the bushes and crept down a creek right under the guard's nose. We made our every move for that last hundred yards a careful study. It took us nearly two hours to go that three hundred feet down the creek to the Rhine.

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"I came to the river first and was suddenly swept off by the current without having an opportunity to take off the rest of my clothes. The Rhine has a terrific current at the point we crossed, and I had a hard fight to get my trousers off. Eddies and whirlpools buffeted me about, and the current, instead of carrying me to the Swiss shore, carried me back toward Bochelard.

"Lieutenant Isaacs and I lost each other in the river. We both had a hard fight to make the Swiss shore six hundred feet off. We suffered much from the icy water which made us both fear that we would go down with cramps. I landed on a sandy spit and crawled through the bushes to the Swiss railroad line paralleling the river.

"I ran down the railroad track to keep my circulation up. There were no houses or frontier guards in sight. Finally I came to a country tavern. I shouted up and explained my predicament. The patronne's son came down and put me to bed, all muddy as I was. Then the patronne's daughters, pink cheeked and smiling, prepared hot coffee and schnapps for me.

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"The son of the house went out to find Isaacs. He came back after a long search without finding him and my heart sank. I feared he had been lost. Imagine my joy when a frontier guard came in half an hour later with the word that Isaacs had landed farther up the river and would soon come down to the inn.

"I want to correct the impression that the Swiss along the frontier are pro-German. They are the kindest and best-natured people imaginable. What they have seen of the Germans, and the million French and Belgian évacués, who have come through at Basle from the invaded districts of northern France and Belgium, have made them more determined than ever to defend their neutrality against their northern neighbors.

"I want to say a final word about the American Red Cross in Switzerland. The food boxes sent by the American Red Cross to the boys in Germany come through regularly and the food sent was of the most substantial sort. I can say that American soldier prisoners in Germany were as well fed as they are while in the American Army. The French and Belgian officers may

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get more luxuries, such as *pâté-de-fois gras* and the like, but as for wholesome food, nothing can equal the Red Cross packages. American *soldiers* were fed as well as French or Belgian *officers*."

Lieutenant Willis, after a short stay in Berne after his escape from Germany, left for France on October 17. He was accompanied by Lieutenant Edouard Isaacs, of Portsmouth, Virginia, and by Lieutenant George Puryear, of Memphis, Tennessee, who escaped from Villingen at the same time, but who got to the Rhine and into Switzerland a day before they did.

In the party was the fourth American to escape from Germany within a week, Frank Sovicki, a Polish-American of Shenandoah, Pennsylvania, who escaped from a farm seven kilometres from the Swiss frontier a few days before Lieutenant Puryear and Lieutenants Willis and Isaacs came across. Sovicki was the first American private to escape from a German prison camp, and Lieutenant Puryear the first American officer to duplicate the trick. All four

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men expressed the determination to return at once to the front in France.

Private Sovicki was sent to Camp Rastatt, but was put to work on a farm about seven or eight kilometres from the Swiss frontier. He seems to have escaped without great difficulties on October 8, 1918, and was in excellent condition when he arrived at the American Red Cross, October 10.

Private Sovicki stated he was captured at Château-Thierry July 13. He was hiding in a shell-hole waiting for the time to come when he could perhaps get back to his company, when he was surrounded by seven German soldiers. They treated him rather roughly. For two days he was kept behind the lines without any food or water. His spiral puttees, watch and chain, together with a small amount of money, were taken away from him. His shoes, however, which were very wet and muddy and looked to be of practically no value, he was able to retain. He was taken to Laon, where he was placed at work, and stayed there for about a month. According to his statement, the Americans were given the hardest kind of work to

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do, and the prisoners of other nationalities were given work only after all the Americans had been assigned.

For food, they received hot water for breakfast, a soup (little more than water) for dinner, and for supper hot water again. The ration of bread was three pounds for each seven men. Treatment here was very brutal, and he states that several men were actually hit with rifles until blood flowed from their veins.

From Laon, he was sent to Rastatt. The journey was accomplished in three days and three nights. They were shipped like cattle in freight cars, in which fifty men were crowded. Each man had for the journey one and one half pounds of bread, and they were allowed to have their canteens filled with water twice during the journey. At Rastatt, the American Help Committee provided him with food and clothing, and gave him five marks. The conditions in the camp he stated were good; the place was clean and comfortable. The beds of the men were arranged in two tiers, provided with mattresses. Each man was furnished with two blankets, which he states had been taken from

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Russia. They were of good size, but quite thin. He complains that when the weekly rations were given out, the German censors would open every can. In this way, of course, a great deal of the food was spoiled before the men could eat it.

After staying at Rastatt fifteen days, he was sent to the farm seven kilometres from the Swiss border, where he was put at work as an ordinary farm laborer. In this farm were also about fifteen Russian prisoners, and they all slept together in the same room in the barn. The farmer had four cows, and whenever milked, soldiers came and took the milk. They also came every week with wagons and loaded up everything on the farm, — potatoes, apples, chickens, or anything else available. The smallest bit of food, rotten or good, was cooked for use. One mark was the price of one potato. Old men and women who were sick could get nothing. Shoes were made of wood soles with some kind of paper top, and were useless in wet weather. There were no horses to be seen, and only a few cows. Women and children were doing the work. The son of the farmer, who had returned from the front, was obliged to send his

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uniform back for use by some other soldier; this included his shoes, hat, and all military equipment. This German soldier told Sovicki that in two months all would be over, as every day the Germans were falling back, and also that the supplies for the soldiers were very scarce. This son treated him decently and showed him how to do things without pushing him. He often found children crying and hungry. There was no silver coin in Germany; only paper money was used.

He also said that whenever horses, whether wounded or sick, died, soldiers would cut off pieces of meat with their knives and put them in their sacks to be cooked at the first opportunity. Other observations gave the impression that people were very dissatisfied, and that everybody was longing for peace.

Following are brief accounts of three escapes into Holland from German prison camps.

*Lieutenant Robert Alexander Anderson*, U.S. Air Forces, attached to 40th Squadron, R.A.F.; home address, Honolulu; born June 6, 1894, in Honolulu; before the war was an electrical en-



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gineer. Escaped by way of Holland, reaching there October 23, 1918. He was captured August 27, 1918, five miles southeast of Arras. Had a bullet wound just below the left knee, also a piece of explosive bullet in left hip and right calf, all fresh wounds. The German medical treatment consisted of painting with iodine and bandaging, and a little later injecting with anti-tetanus fluid. Treatment was fair. He was only given one bowl of soup and a piece of bread on the journey to the hospital at Mons. This trip took from noon one day until midnight the next day and was by light railway to Douai, and on the floor of a box car to Mons. He was placed in the hospital called Marchenschule at Mons. There were three hundred men in the hospital — British, French, Russians, Italians, Belgian civilians, and two Americans. He was detained at the concentration camp at Fresnes, where men and R.A.F. officers were collected to be sent to Germany. He stated that the guards were stupid and unsuspicious, and it never occurred to them that any one would wish to escape; that they were in general easy to evade. The prison consisted of an old

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brewery, from which all machinery had been removed, very dirty and full of fleas and other vermin. Bedding consisted of straw mattress and two blankets. There was no heating or lighting, and no bathing facilities. He saw no cruelty to American or other officers. For the first attempt to escape, he was given fourteen days in solitary confinement on 200 grs. of bread per day, and water. The food consisted of 200 to 300 grs. of bread per day, very dark colored and soggy, acorn coffee at 7 A.M. and 4 P.M., and soup at noon. He states that the British prisoners never received anything until from four months to a year's time, in the way of relief supplies. He was allowed to write hospital cards of ten lines a month and two letters of 20 lines. He states that he knew of the enemy using explosive bullets. He escaped at 10 P.M., September 26, 1918, from the camp at Fresnes. He further says that the people were very badly off for food and clothes and much dissatisfied; also that prices were very high and, according to statements of civilians, that there was much desertion, and no petrol for motor transportation.

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*Lieutenant John Owen Donaldson*, U.S. Air Service, attached to 32d Squadron, R.A.F.; son of General T. Q. Donaldson, 182 Wyoming Avenue, Washington, D.C.; born May 14, 1897; was a student at Cornell University before the war. Escaped by way of Holland, reaching there October 23, 1918. Was captured September 21, 1918, south of Douai, France. He was in the prison camp at Douai, then Condé, and afterwards Fresnes. Douai was a permanent camp; Condé was a temporary camp for sending men to Germany. The commandant in general treated the men well. The second in command, a sergeant major, showed cruelty to the men, but respect to a live officer. Lodgings were bad; three blankets were allowed to a man, but were full of lice and fleas. No heating, no lights, and no attention paid to ventilation. No soap and no toilet facilities. For attempting to escape from the prison at Condé, he was given solitary confinement on 200 grs. of bread and water a day for two weeks. This had a bad effect for the first six days. After that, British soldiers brought food. The camp food consisted of 200 to 300 grs. of

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bread per day, soup and coffee, — the bread very sour, the soup thin, and the coffee made out of burnt barley. He escaped at 9.30 P.M., September 26, 1918, from Fresnes, by taking the tiles off the roof and escaping through a hole. He states that the Germans are badly in need of food and that soldiers were sending bread from the front back to Germany; that the Belgians advised him that many Germans had deserted.

*Thomas Elingwood Tillinghart*, Lieutenant 17th Aerial Squadron, escaped by way of Holland, reaching there October 23, 1918. Home, Westerly, Rhode Island; born May 29, 1893, at Providence, Rhode Island; was a student when he entered the service; captured September 22, 1918, two miles southwest of Cambrai.

On the date of his capture, he was walked to a small village back of Cambrai. He was there questioned and put in a church for the night. The next day he was taken to Fresnes four miles north of Valenciennes. There were two prison camps there under the same officer. In one were British soldiers who had been there a long time, two or three years, and in the other

## Escapes

were British soldiers who had been taken in March, 1918. The former were receiving packages from home, but the latter were depending on just what the Germans furnished them, consisting of coffee and bread for breakfast and supper, and cabbage soup for the noon meal. They received 200 grs. of bread a day. Lieutenant Tillinghart was in this camp and could not eat the food. He escaped from this prison on the evening of his transfer. Each prisoner had one blanket and slept on the floor of a very poorly ventilated factory. The officers had a room to themselves with mattresses and two blankets. The blankets were dirty and contained body lice. There was no heating; lighting was by candle. It was not a regular prison but one where men were detained on their way back to Germany. There was a small yard in which the men could walk, but when they were all out, there was not sufficient room to move about. They were allowed to write one postal card a week. Lieutenant Tillinghart escaped on September 26, 1918, at 9.30 P.M. from Fresnes, four miles north of Valenciennes. He took the tiles from the roof and crawled through, dropping

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into the adjacent yard. His report on conditions behind the German lines was as follows:

“Food is very scarce. Men have been known to send bread home. Near the frontier, some men were given their bread and allowed frs. 4 a day with which to purchase their food. Military discipline was excellent.”

## Chapter IX

### HUMAN WRECKAGE

By the agreement of March 15 and May 15, 1918, between France and Germany and of July 2, 1917, between England and Germany, it was provided that prisoners suffering from certain diseases or incapacitated to a certain degree by wounds or otherwise should be interned in Switzerland. Many of the prisoners interned under this agreement were from northern France and Belgium. They had been captured in the early days of the war and had spent three to four years in German prison camps. In retreating with the French and Belgian armies, their families had been left behind within the zone of occupation of the German armies where they too were in effect prisoners. All communication was of course interrupted and neither knew the fate of the other. The families were moved about by the fortunes of war, and became separated in many instances. Frequently some were deported into Germany and forced to work in what was practically slavery and so

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the separation became complete. If letters from the soldier went through some neutral agency to his old home, it was probable that the home was destroyed, the family scattered, and address unknown. Thus the separation and ignorance of the fate of each.

In the latter part of 1917 an arrangement was effected between France and Germany by which civilians in occupied territory were permitted to pass within the lines occupied by the troops of their country of origin.

Under this agreement civilians from northern France and Belgium, then within the lines of the German armies, were sent into France to the number of 1300 daily. Two trains arrived each day on the Swiss-German frontier at Basle, and passed out of Switzerland into France at Bouveret, each train containing 650 old men, women, and children.

Nothing more pathetic could be imagined than the appearance of these sufferers as they stepped upon the station platform at Basle, all their worldly possessions on their backs or carried in their hands. An old man or woman who must be taken at once to the hospital for medi-



## Human Wreckage

cal or surgical treatment; a mother with her infant child and perhaps two or three older children clinging to her skirts; here and there sisters of charity, priests, and teachers. They had, in many instances, walked miles to meet the train that was to carry them out of captivity, their feet were so swollen that it was impossible to wear shoes, and they were barefooted or in stocking feet, especially the old. They had been one, two, three days in the day coaches — all kinds of men, women, and children huddled together with only such scanty food as they were able to bring with them, little water to wash with and no soap, sleeping in their clothing where they sat; dirty, hungry, destitute, desolate humanity, with nothing left but hope and the comfort of escaping from the inhumanity of their captors.

Benjamin Vollotin, the eminent Swiss author, discovered that many of these "repatriés" had husbands, brothers, fathers among the prisoners interned in Switzerland and he determined to bring them together if for only a few days. This was a most difficult task as it involved making a record each day of 1300

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people at Basle; then an examination of the internment records at Berne. If close male relatives were discovered among the interned prisoners in Switzerland, it was then necessary to obtain permission for the prisoner to travel to some agreed point for the reunion; also to arrange for the repatrié's relatives to return from Évian-les-Bains in France to this point. The food and lodging of the prisoners and repatriés must also be provided. Mr. Vollotin overcame all these obstacles successfully and organized "Le Bonheur Familial" which provided the funds and entertainment for these reunions which took place at Bouveret, Switzerland.

For five days the reunion lasted in each case and it was not unusual to have from fifty to one hundred and fifty as guests of this society.

All the kind people in and about Bouveret did everything in their power to help these victims of war and make their five days together as delightful as possible. There was no thought in this little village but one of helpfulness and unselfish consideration. They not only provided for the entertainment of the reunited families, but visited each train as it passed through

## Human Wreckage

and supplied hot coffee, bouillon, chocolate, and sandwiches.

Thirteen hundred repatriés were arriving daily, and the reunion could not be prolonged. At the end of the five days, the families were obliged to separate again, the prisoner to return to his zone of internment, the wife, mother, brothers, sisters, children, to return to Évian and from there be distributed to unknown homes in various sections of southern France, there to await the end of the war and then to return to devastated homes in a land made barren by the engines of war or the need-less depredations and destruction of the Hun.

This steady stream of human wreckage passing through Switzerland daily for months was one of the most pathetic incidents of the war. Every phase of human suffering and emotion was there depicted: ruthless separation of families, sickness, death, privation, torturing anxiety for month after month, homes destroyed, the most sacred family ties ruthlessly broken, thirteen hundred victims every day passing out of the hands of the Hun at Bouveret and into the friendly hands of the French

## Prisoners of the Great War

at Evian-les-Bains. Harmless, innocent victims, each stamped with the horrors and suffering of war, up to July 1, more than 200,000 of these had passed through Switzerland.

I herewith append copies of characteristic notes taken from returning prisoners who passed through Berne, showing in brief the conditions at the camps where they had been held captives. These particular notes were taken on the arrival of the train at 2 A.M. on November 9, 1918, two days before the armistice was signed. This was a train of French prisoners:

*Camp Güstrow:* Güstrow is a "Stammlager" well organized. There is a side track from the railroad station to the camp and packages are delivered directly inside the post-office. After two days' delay, the parcels are distributed. Drinking water is not good but is not dangerous. No wash-rooms in the camp; bath-rooms are large, clean, and open all the week. There is a large theatre and a cinema. Prisoners may go to a public house outside the camp where they may purchase lemonade at a reasonable price. Canteens are established in the camp, but sell

## Human Wreckage

nothing except toilet articles. Libraries, four in number, English, French, German, Russian. Discipline not hard. Colonel in command is a good man and has issued special orders that both the Americans and French must be well treated. Blocks are not separated. Prisoners pronounce Güstrow one of the best German camps.

*Cassel:* A bad camp. In 1915, 3000 French and Russians died of typhus. Parcels not arriving regularly. Camp is not clean. Grippe exists in the camp and authorities are doing little to prevent it.

*Göttingen in Hanover:* A good camp, well situated near an old castle, one tower of which is in the camp. Camp is well organized, and conditions satisfactory. Prisoners call this camp "seashore for prisoners." Prisoners have no complaints. Camp belongs to the Tenth Army Corps. General von Hauish, who is not well regarded by the prisoners, is the Kommandantur.

*Limburg:* Americans formerly here have been sent to Münster.

*Münster:* Established in a German caserne, and prisoners consider it a great advantage to be housed in a permanent structure. Prisoners

## Prisoners of the Great War

are treated as soldiers and make no complaint.

*Mannheim:* Three new American prisoners arrived on November 2. Already some Americans there, number not known. Camp is very dirty. Many prisoners (not Americans) have been dying recently.

*Heidelberg* (officers' camp): Camp is well organized, and American officers have made no complaints.

*Montmédy:* Twelve Americans were there; all new prisoners. This is a concentration camp just behind German lines and is not therefore visited by neutral delegates who cannot go into the zone of the armies. Germans can therefore abuse prisoners. French, Americans, and English are starved about ten days before being sent into permanent German camps. American prisoners had all their jewelry stolen by the German guards.

*In general:* French prisoners report American Red Cross parcels arriving all right.

## Chapter X

### APPRECIATION

COPIES of characteristic letters from prisoners received at headquarters at Berne, in acknowledgment of the Red Cross service:

*Christiania, October 31*

DEAR MR. DENNETT:

Just going to steamer, Hurrah! I left instructions in Berlin for you to be informed of my release on the 22nd and hoped to write a long letter from Copenhagen, but I have had hectic and busy days for a fortnight, you may believe. A thousand thanks for all you have done.

Thank God I am going to a country where I can walk into a shop and buy a collar and a pair of shoes just as if it were a simple, ordinary act such as our ancestors were accustomed to.

Sincerely

HENRY C. EMERY

# Prisoners of the Great War

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*American Help Committee  
Kriegsgefangenenlager  
Brandenburg, Germany  
July 24, 1918*

Mr. Carl P. Dennett,  
American Red Cross, Berne.

DEAR MR. DENNETT:

Your letters of July 2nd and 5th, with cards enclosed, were received, for which many thanks. You can rest assured that I will do my best to inform you of new arrivals at this camp.

Relative to your letter of the 5th inst., the information I can give you is: We have a very nice international band, with Paul J. Nagle as director, giving concerts each week. We also put a small show on every three weeks, having a fairly large theatre. The Y.M.C.A. are doing great work for us, having already sent us many games, books, and music. They are also sending us baseballs and tennis gear, as we have a very nice field for all kinds of athletic sports. These grounds were given us by the German officials, and opened with the band with different sports, the Kommandantur and other German officers being present. We have membership to these



## Appreciation

grounds, all Americans being members. Our allies are interested in baseball and volley-ball. I have a small but very nice library attached to our Help Committee, and books to study, which all enjoy.

Hoping this will be satisfactory to you, and assuring you that I will be glad to give you any information I can, I beg to remain, with best wishes to yourself and all

Very truly yours

(Sgd) JAMES DELANEY, *President*  
*American Help Committee*

*Landshut, Bavaria, Oct. 15, 1918*

GENTLEMEN:

In the emergency rations just received from you we found stamped post-cards with the Velvet smoking tobacco. These were to be returned to the donors of the tobacco, and were to bear a few words of acknowledgment. I would appreciate it very much if you would be kind enough to drop each of them a line and tell them how wonderful it is to receive real tobacco here in a prison camp. The names of the donors are:

## Prisoners of the Great War

R. T. Humble, Camp Point, Al.

Ralph Norton, Denver, Mo.

R. D. Lewis, 52 Westmoreland Place, St.  
Louis, Mo.

W. T. Burkhart, 3 Centre St., Howell, N.Y.  
May LaBrash, Wimbleton, N.D.

Also a sweater — a beautiful soft one — was  
received from Anna H. Wyckhoff, Asbury,  
Warren Co., New Jersey.

Thanking you in advance for your many  
kindnesses which you are continually doing for  
all of us, believe me

Very truly yours

HENRY C. LEWIS

*1st Lieut. U.S. Air Service*

*for the A.R.C. Committee*

*Ukrainerlager, Rastatt, Baden, Oct. 25, 1918*

American Red Cross,

Berne, Switzerland.

GENTLEMEN:

Your letter of Sept. 27th to hand and  
was referred to Ex-President Hallyburton and  
myself for reply upon our arrival here on the  
22nd inst.



#### MEMBERS OF RASTATT CAMP COMMITTEE

Sitting: Sergeant G. C. O'Kelly. Standing, left to right: Corporal W. C. Dietrich, Sergeant M. V. Barrett, Corporal Jules Martin, Corporal Joseph Stonina, and Corporal W. E. Moore

*The picture shows the excellent condition of the prisoners as they came out of Germany*

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## Appreciation

Your opening paragraph accurately depicts conditions as they existed when our letter Sept. 18th was drafted. Our attitude may have been extremely critical, but we were acting on the suggestion made by Mr. Ellis Loring Dresel as far back as February, 1918, i.e., commenting on the service as it appeared to us at the time. We are pleased to be able to state that your service is **AI** now, according to reports of the Committee, and we regret our enforced absence in another camp did not permit us to comment favorably upon your good work sooner. Right here we wish to say, the camp committee here as constituted at present is most efficient and you need not hesitate to confide in their ability and trustworthiness. We feel sure they are anxious to profit by your criticisms, adverse or otherwise, and will not hesitate to reciprocate if conditions warrant. President O'Kelley and Secretary Moore are just the right men in the right place.

Yours very sincerely

(Signed)

EDGAR M. HALLYBURTON

*Ex-Pres. Am. Help Com.*

CHARLES A. GEOGHEGAN

*Ex-Sec'y Am. Help Com.*

# Prisoners of the Great War

*Rastatt, Ukrainerlager*

*October 19, 1918*

American Red Cross,  
8, Hirschengraben, Berne.

Att. Mr. C. P. Dennett.

DEAR SIRs:

It is rather hard to answer your communication of October 16, 1918, as the thanks I feel cannot be expressed in words for the help you have given my mother and the relief you have given myself. However, my appreciation that I cannot express in words shall be shown here in my actions as an American.

I am also enclosing the allotment applications filled and signed with the exception of the station which I was not sure of.

Thanking you again for all that you have done for me, I am

Yours very sincerely

PVT. HERBERT F. UELTZ

*11th Engrs. Rwy. 165, Co. F*

*Berne, Nov. 7, 1918*

The several officers of the American Flying Corps, Infantry and Engineers who have to-day

## Appreciation

received clothing, food, toilet articles and tobacco from Lieut. Shea, extend their grateful acknowledgment to the American Red Cross.

Signed: H. C. LANDON

*Captain 101st Engineers*

*Karlsruhe*

(Extract from Camp Committee Report of Karlsruhe,  
October 26, 1918)

I shall report in full upon the last shipment and disposal of previous one. During the past week some sixty American officers have passed through the camp. To them you are good fairies and I am named Santa.

(Sgd) LIEUT. THOMAS P. SHEA

(Extract from Camp Committee Report of Darmstadt,  
October 24, 1918)

It has been a great help to us to have received the clothing and food supplies sent to us. Men come here from the front, sick, wounded, dirty and hungry, and it makes new men of them to receive clean clothes and good food.

(Sgd) CORPORAL EDWARD J. BARNES  
*President, American Committee, Darmstadt*

## Prisoners of the Great War

Colonel Walter D. Webb, commanding officer at Vichy, writes Am. Red Cross Headquarters, December 19, 1918:

"Am sure it will interest you to hear of my interviews with repatriate American prisoners from Germany. Principal topic of their conversation is praise of what Amcross did for them while they were prisoners. Many of them have stated that they think they would have starved if it had not been for Amcross boxes. Many arrived here with these boxes under their arms, used as lockers for their souvenirs and personal effects."

*October 12, 1918*

Mr. C. P. Dennett,  
Deputy Com'r, American Red Cross,  
Berne, Switzerland.

DEAR MR. DENNETT:

Yesterday I received a post-card from the Red Cross at Berne, dated August 22nd, saying that you have had a cable advice from Washington requesting that a credit of one hundred dollars be established for me on your books. To-day came your letter of October 1st



## Appreciation

in which you say that 500 francs has been placed at my credit with you, by the Paris branch of the Equitable Trust Co., and that you have sent me 225 francs of this sum. Yet another card, dated August 30th, which I received last week, says that on that date you sent me 250 francs. So that, up to the present you have sent me a total of 475 francs. That's right, is n't it?

I have not yet received either of the sums which you have sent me but no doubt they are on the way to me. Will you please hold the balance which you have for me, until December first, and from that date send me a monthly allowance of twenty dollars as long as I remain a prisoner? Then, at the close of the war, or so soon as we are exchanged, I will settle my account with you.

May I impose upon the Red Cross to the extent of asking some one in your office to write a few brief letters for me? It will be a great service which I shall much appreciate. The letters are as follows:

(As these letters were personal, they are not reproduced here.)

## Prisoners of the Great War

I'm afraid that this is a very "cheeky" request, as well as a very large order. But I do hope that some of you kind people may be willing to fill it. I shall be tremendously grateful.

I wonder if you know how deeply all of us unfortunate "gefangenen" appreciate what you are doing for us? Now this is not to be regarded as a tactful forerunner of future requests. No, by Jove! We swear by the American Red Cross, every man of us. It would do your heart good to see us on parcel day. The morale goes away up, sky high. We're like a lot of youngsters.

By the way, the carload of emergency food which you sent us September 13th has just arrived and it was most sorely needed, as personal parcels have not been coming for about three weeks, and we have a lot of new arrivals, too. This is not, of course, the official acknowledgment of the shipment. Lt. Browning, Chairman of the Camp Red Cross Committee, will send you this as soon as we can check all the goods.

I'm enclosing a paper from the Red Cross which I have just received. No doubt the cards

## Appreciation

asked for have reached you before this. I have returned each one promptly.

Very sincerely

CAPTAIN JAMES N. HALL

*Offizier Kriegsgefangenenlager*

*Landshut, Bayern*

October 20, 1918

Mr. C. P. Dennett,

American Red Cross, Berne, Suisse.

MY DEAR MR. DENNETT:

Having just received several letters, and being unable to answer them due to the postal regulations, I wish you would do me the favor of dropping a line to each of the senders, acknowledging their delightful notes and explaining why I am unable to reply direct.

(Here follow five names and addresses, with statement of what he wishes said.)

I am well, happy, content, provided with *ample* food and clothing.

Thanking you for your many past favors and thanking you in advance for writing the above letter, believe me, as ever,

---

## Chapter XI

### AGREEMENTS AND TREATIES

THE United States Government took the position that it was not to be considered a party to either the Hague or the Geneva Convention during the present war. This was due to the fact that the Germans invariably invoked the Geneva Convention or the Hague Convention when it was convenient for them to do so to gain some point, and never hesitated to violate any feature of these agreements when it was to their advantage to do so. As the policy of Germany was to use the treaties solely for their own ends, violating or invoking them both at will, it obviously afforded no protection to the United States, and the only step possible for our government was to notify Germany that neither of these conventions was to be considered as binding.

Both of these treaties specifically provided for the treatment and status of prisoners of war. As the United States was not to be considered a party to either treaty and as there was no

## Agreements and Treaties

prisoner of war agreement between Germany and the United States, it left no agreement of any kind, except the treaty of 1799, which only applied to Prussia, under which to work with reference to prisoners of war. We were left, therefore, with only the hope of humane treatment or the alternative of reprisals.

The immediate result was that the American prisoners taken by the Germans were at first badly treated in many respects, and there was great and needless delay in reporting them as prisoners. It was frequently months before missing men could be located and they were not in a position meanwhile to communicate with their families or with relief bureaus. There was no agreement which permitted them to communicate at all or to notify any one that they were prisoners. This made it very difficult to provide them with the necessities of life which were so essential under conditions in Germany, especially so with the absolute disregard by the German authorities of everything pertaining to the welfare of the prisoners in their hands.

The need of some special agreement for the protection of prisoners of war was seen both by

## Prisoners of the Great War

Great Britain and France, and both of these countries arranged for delegates to meet representatives of the German Government to draw up agreements for the treatment and repatriation of prisoners. The English agreement was dated July 2, 1917, and the first French agreement, December, 1917, effective March 15, 1918, supplemented May 15, 1918.

The American Government attempted to arrange a conference in the spring of 1918 for the purpose of drawing an agreement for the treatment and exchange of prisoners of war, and the German Government agreed to a conference to be held in the month of June, 1918. This was later postponed until August and then September 23, 1918, on which date the delegates of the two governments met at Berne, Switzerland.

The delegates of the United States were Hon. John W. Garrett, Minister to The Hague; General Kernan, U.S.A.; Hon. John W. Davis, Solicitor-General of the United States Government, later Ambassador to Great Britain; and Captain Hough, of the United States Navy.

The delegates of the German Government

## Agreements and Treaties

were Count Montgelas, Minister Plenipotentiary; Dr. von Keller, Counselor of Legation; Major Drundt; Captain Wilke, of the German Navy; Von Hindenburg, Minister Plenipotentiary and chief of the prisoners' section of the German Legation in Berne. Major-General Friedrich was to have headed the German delegates, but he died just before the convention met.

The conference ended and the agreement was signed November 9, 1918, two days before the armistice. We, therefore, had no agreement of any description to work under during the war. However, when executed it was the best prisoner of war agreement yet drawn and would have been of immense value had the war continued.

The United States delegates held preliminary meetings in Paris, and as I had been building up a system for the practical work of locating, feeding, and clothing the American prisoners in the hands of the German forces, reporting them to the General Headquarters of the American Expeditionary Forces in France, and placing them in touch with their families, I was re-

## Prisoners of the Great War

quested to prepare a brief covering the principal points affecting our prisoners which were not included, or only partially covered, in previous agreements between England, France, and Germany.

On September 11, 1918, I forwarded to the preliminary conference at Paris a memorandum of the points, which, in my judgment, should be particularly covered in the new agreement. The necessity for having these features included had been clearly indicated by actual interviews with hundreds of prisoners returning from Germany, by communications received from American prisoners in Germany, from reports of the representatives of the Spanish Embassy, and from long interviews with Bonita Sarda, the Spanish Embassy representative who had been visiting our prisoners in Germany and was sent out from Berlin at our request, especially for the purpose of giving this information. Many of the points which it was desired to cover were already provided for in the French and English agreements, and the object of my memorandum was to suggest matters not already incorporated or imperfectly covered in previous agreements



## Agreements and Treaties

and which were vital to the welfare of our prisoners. Practically all of these suggestions were adopted in some form and made a part of the final agreement.

Following are some of the most interesting extracts from the brief which are included in this book because they will bring the reader into intimate touch with some of the living and working problems which required particular regulation in order to protect our prisoners in the German prison camps. They also show that actual working experience had demonstrated the fact that it was necessary to cover by agreement matters which ordinarily a civilized nation would provide for purely from a humanitarian standpoint. Many of these suggestions were to remedy known abuses of which I had obtained positive knowledge through various channels, including returning prisoners, escaped prisoners, and neutral delegates. The brief is not reproduced in full as much of it was devoted to suggested extensions and additions to the French Accord which are omitted as they were principally matters of detail and not of special interest.

# Prisoners of the Great War

## EXTRACTS FROM BRIEF PREPARED FOR PROPOSED AGREEMENT WITH GERMANY REGARDING THE TREATMENT OF AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR

### PREFACE

In approaching the question of treatment of American and German prisoners of war, it should be borne in mind that the conditions surrounding American prisoners of war are entirely different from those surrounding German prisoners of war, for the following reasons:

1. The German Government does not provide adequate food to sustain life for the American prisoners of war.

2. The German Government does not provide adequate warm clothing for American prisoners of war.

3. The United States provides for German prisoners of war precisely the same food as that supplied to the American troops, which is wholesome, adequate, and even elaborate.

4. The United States provides for the German prisoners of war sufficient warm clothing.

The American Government finds itself in the curious position of having to feed and clothe

## Agreements and Treaties

German prisoners of war in its hands, and also the American prisoners of war in the hands of the German military forces. To meet this condition, the United States Government has made arrangements with the American Red Cross by which the American Red Cross undertakes to do the following:

1. Obtain at the earliest possible moment the names of American prisoners of war in the hands of the German military forces.

2. Obtain accurate camp addresses of these American prisoners of war.

3. Transmit this information to General Headquarters of the American Expeditionary Forces, to the American Red Cross at Washington, which in turn notifies the family of the prisoner; and to the American Red Cross at Paris to clear its records in connection with the work of searching for missing men in the hospitals in France.

4. Ship necessary relief supplies to American prisoners.

Owing to the failure of the German Government to provide American soldiers with sufficient food to sustain life, or adequate clothing,

## Prisoners of the Great War

the American prisoners of war suffer great hardship, which may even lead to death, until they receive food, clothing, soap, towels, and toilet articles from the American Red Cross, Department Prisoners of War at Berne. Inasmuch as the German Government is unable or unwilling to properly feed and clothe American prisoners of war, and inasmuch as the American Government has furnished the necessary machinery to adequately provide for these prisoners, both as to food, clothing, and toilet articles, it is clearly the duty of the German Government to furnish the information as to the exact address of American prisoners of war at the earliest possible moment to place the American Red Cross in a position to promptly furnish the American prisoners of war with the necessary food, clothing, and toilet articles which the German Government should furnish but fails to provide.

So long as the American Government provides proper, wholesome, and adequate food, as well as clothing and toilet articles, as at present, for the German prisoners of war, the same necessity does not exist for the earliest possible

## Agreements and Treaties

information regarding these German prisoners of war as is the case with American prisoners of war who must be subjected to intense suffering, and perhaps even death, through the failure of the German Government to provide the necessities of life, unless the German Government furnishes addresses to which the necessities of life may be shipped to these prisoners by the American Red Cross at the earliest possible moment.

Under present conditions, it takes a minimum of approximately one month before the American Red Cross is advised of the address of American prisoners of war, to which food and clothing may be sent, and it requires approximately one month before the food and clothing reach the prisoner after it is shipped from Switzerland. This means that the only clothing the prisoner has for the first two months after capture is that which he wore at the time of capture; that he is without soap, towels, toilet articles, or proper nourishment for this period. To reduce this time the American Red Cross has established help committees in the various camps where there are American prisoners, and has supplies

## Prisoners of the Great War

in the hands of these committees consisting of food, clothing, and toilet articles that may be immediately passed out to newly arrived prisoners. It is imperative that these help committees, which are organized solely to meet the failure of the German Government to adequately provide for its prisoners of war, should be given adequate facilities for the safe storage and care of surplus food and clothing, and special facilities for communicating with the American Red Cross, Department Prisoners of War, at Berne, with reference to supplies required, or the arrival of new prisoners.

### CAMP COMMITTEES

1. American prisoners of war shall have the right to elect camp committees to be known as "Camp Help Committees," which shall operate under appropriate by-laws.

2. Said camp committees shall be empowered to communicate freely and directly with the American Red Cross, Department Prisoners of War, at Berne, on the following subjects:

(a) Number and names of prisoners at the prison camps.

## Agreements and Treaties

(b) Number and names of prisoners in the hospital connected with the camp.

(c) Number and names of newly arrived prisoners as rapidly as they arrive.

(d) Number and names of prisoners who are transferred from the camp, with statement as to destination.

(e) Amount of food and clothing supply on hand, and estimated amount of food and clothing supply required.

(f) Under items (a), (b), (c), (d), and (e), the following special information may always be given: prisoner's name, rank, regiment number, company number, prison number, prison camp address, date of birth, place of birth, name of parent, relative, or friend, size of clothing; whether prisoner uses tobacco and if so, cigars, cigarettes, or pipe; and condition of health—all as indicated on card reproduced on page 176.

These cards shall be furnished to the camp committees by the American Red Cross, and shall be printed in the English language. Similar cards may be provided by the German Government to German prisoners of war, giving

# Prisoners of the Great War

Name.....  
Rank..... Your No.....  
Reg't..... Co.....  
Prison Camp Address.....  
.....  
Prison No.....  
Born Date.....  
Born Place.....  
Name of Parent (relative or friend).....  
.....  
Address.....  
.....  
Size Clothing: Coat.....  
Trousers (waist)..... Leg.....  
Collar..... Gloves..... Hat.....  
Shoes.....  
Do you use cigars, cigarettes or pipe?.....  
Are you wounded?.....  
Message for family: (health, etc.).....  
.....  
.....  
What do you need for clothing?.....  
.....  
.....

This card must be filled out and mailed at once in order to supply you with food and clothing, and to advise your family of your address.

AMERICAN RED CROSS

By CARL P. DENNETT

*Deputy Commissioner  
Department Prisoners of War*



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like information and may be printed in German, and German prisoners may be permitted to mail them to their nearest friend or relative or to such relief bureau as may be indicated by the German Government.

3. Said camp committees shall be authorized and empowered to receive shipments of food and clothing for distribution to American prisoners of war, and they shall be provided at each prison camp with suitable storage facilities, under lock and key, for these reserve supplies of food and clothing. Camp committees, or their assistants, shall have permission to visit daily, whenever same may be necessary, such storehouses for the purpose of making inventories of supplies on hand, or distributing such supplies, and, specifically, camp help committees shall be authorized to do the following things in addition to those enumerated above:

(a) Keep necessary books of account of all supplies received and disbursed.

(b) Make up necessary blank reports of supplies received and distributed.

(c) Secure proper receipts from the individual prisoners, and mail originals or copies

## Prisoners of the Great War

of these papers to the American Red Cross, Department Prisoners of War, at Berne.

(d) Communicate freely with the American Red Cross, Department Prisoners of War, at Berne, on all matters connected with supplies of food or clothing, and all information with reference to the number of prisoners in the camp, arrivals or departures, condition of health of prisoners, and no such correspondence shall apply against the regular allowance of four postal cards and two letters per month permitted to each prisoner as private correspondence.

4. Individual complaints in regard to treatment or conditions in the camp to be taken up with the camp committee, and the camp committee is to be permitted to present these complaints to the camp commander and representative of the Spanish Embassy who shall give the matter attention and report on action taken to the camp committee. Men making complaints shall not be punished for making these complaints. Camp committees may visit freely all parts of the camp.

5. Camp committees shall have the privilege

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of visiting men in the lazarets or hospitals connected with or near the camp to ascertain their condition of health, and to take them such articles of food, clothing, and other supplies as may be desired, and report on their condition to the American Red Cross, Department Prisoners of War, at Berne.

6. Said camp committees shall appoint a camp committee correspondent or representative in every hospital and to be attached to each labor detachment and whose duty it shall be to order and receive from the camp committee such provisions and supplies as may be required by his hospital or labor detachment, give proper receipts therefor and keep proper records, copies or originals of which shall be sent to the camp committee. The commandants of the hospitals, labor detachments, and camps must allow the camp committee correspondent to communicate without restriction with the camp committee regarding all matters pertaining to food, clothing, toilet articles, or other supplies required, and the camp committee must be allowed to correspond freely on the same subjects with the camp committee corre-

## Prisoners of the Great War

spondents and may forward to such correspondents freely such supplies as may be required for the American prisoners in the various hospitals or labor detachments. No correspondence between the camp committee and the camp committee correspondent in hospitals or on labor detachments shall count against the regular allowance of four postals and two letters per month.

7. Camp committees and camp committee correspondents on labor detachments and in hospitals must select such assistants as may be necessary to properly carry on their work, not less than one man for each five hundred prisoners belonging to each camp, whether the prisoners are all at the camp or out on working detachments, but never fewer than two assistants. They must not be required to work at any other occupation as their entire time will be consumed in keeping the necessary records, attending to the proper distribution of food supplies, making the necessary reports in connection therewith, considering complaints of prisoners, visiting the camp hospitals and doing general welfare work for their fellow prisoners.

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8. The help committees, the camp committee correspondents on labor detachments, and their assistants shall not be transferred from the camp to which they are appointed except for very important reasons which shall be clearly stated to the camp help committee and communicated through the camp help committee to the American Red Cross, Department Prisoners of War, at Berne, and to the Spanish Embassy at Berlin. Under no circumstances, shall they be transferred until thirty days after notice of transfer and their successors have been elected and have taken over the supplies and work and issued proper receipts for supplies received, copies of which must be sent to the American Red Cross at Berne. The American Red Cross at Berne can protest against such changes through the Spanish Embassy and in that case the man or men shall be returned, if in the judgment of the Spanish Embassy, he, or they, have been transferred without proper reason.

9. In all camps where there is an American camp help committee, all supplies shall be examined in the presence of said camp committee

## Prisoners of the Great War

except private parcels sent by others than the American Red Cross. These private parcels must be examined in the presence of the prisoners to whom they are sent.

### GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

For all money taken from prisoners, there shall be issued a receipt or a form of currency against which they may draw at any time, at any place they may be in Germany, for the purchase of such articles as they may require and not otherwise forbidden to prisoners of war. The receipt for currency must be cashed immediately by the first German authority on demand, to such extent as required for purchases by the prisoner and new similar receipts or currency issued for the balance, if any.

No prisoner shall be deprived under any circumstances of any articles of clothing.

NOTE. From reports received from the Spanish Embassy, and from other sources, such as escaped prisoners, it is clearly established that American prisoners of war, after capture, have been deprived of their American-made shoes, for which wooden shoes have been substituted: they

## Agreements and Treaties

have also been deprived of overcoats, hats, and other articles of wearing apparel. On the evidence of escaped prisoners, Tom Hitchcock and Everett Buckley, it is shown that aviators have had taken from them their fur-lined boots, coats, and gloves. The matter of depriving American prisoners of war of their leather shoes has apparently become an established custom in Germany. In one report from the Spanish Embassy on prison conditions at Tüchel, the Commander of the Prison stated that he took the leather shoes away from American prisoners of war on a direct order from the Minister of War. It has sometimes been the practice to give the prisoners a receipt for these shoes and advise them that they would be returned to them at a later date, but the shoes have not been returned. Below is a copy of a receipt issued to American prisoner Tom Hitchcock for shoes taken from him:

2 Gefangenen-Komp

Lager Lechfeld

Lager Lechfeld 20. 7. 18

### Bescheinigung

Dem amerikanischen Flieger HITCHCOCK wurden ein Paar Stiefel, ein Paar Pelzhandschuhe und ein Lederleibriemen abgenommen.

(Signed)

HALLER

*Hauptmann und Kompagnieführer*

## Prisoners of the Great War

It should be provided that prisoners shall, within three days after arrival in interior camps, advise the address to which correspondence and packages may be sent, and should be obligatory. The card of advice should be printed in English and be similar to the card already reproduced, and should be addressed to the American Red Cross, Department Prisoners of War, at Berne, instead of to family of the prisoner, for reasons already stated. None of these cards should count in the authorized correspondence.

All prisoners charged with misdemeanor or crime should be tried within seven days, and in any sentence imposed, the seven days spent in awaiting trial shall count as part of the sentence.

Punishments should be absolutely limited to confinement in properly lighted, ventilated, and heated enclosures with deprivation of liberty and special privileges; but no prisoner should be deprived of food parcels or the right to receive or send mail while undergoing special punishment.

Prisoners should not be punished for lying.



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NOTE. We have had reports of prisoners making complaint as to their treatment, having been accused of lying in making such protest, and of having been specially punished for lying or complaining. This offers opportunities for great abuse, which should be eliminated.

Prisoners undergoing punishment shall receive medical examination when they request it, and shall receive any medical attention necessary, and shall be removed to the hospital under suspension of sentence until they are physically in proper condition to commence or complete the sentence. Prisoners undergoing punishment must always be protected against extreme heat or extreme cold. They must be supplied with mattresses and two blankets, and their own blankets, if any. Prisoners undergoing special punishment shall always be permitted to send for a representative of the camp committee to register any complaint as to treatment and camp committee president shall promptly go to the prisoner. Prisoners undergoing punishment shall be permitted to take regular baths and shall have proper toilet facilities provided, or should be permitted to go to the toilet on demand.

# Prisoners of the Great War

## WORKING RULES FOR PRISONERS OF WAR

It is important that the rules under which prisoners of war may be compelled to work, and classes of work to which they shall be assigned, shall be clearly defined. It should be provided:

1. American prisoners of war should, under no circumstances, be employed in salt mines, coal mines, or any underground work of any description, nor should they be employed in marshes where it is required that they should stand in water for long periods of time.

(After talking with a great many prisoners of war returning from Germany who have worked in salt or other mines, it is clear that the salt mines are especially unhealthful places in which to work, and that abuses are practiced upon prisoners working underground where there is not the restraint upon their guards or upon their fellow workmen that exists when they are above ground.)

2. Prisoners should be classified according to their ability to work in the various occupations. Men who are unused to heavy labor, or men who are convalescing from wounds, or

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recovering from illness, should, under no circumstances, be allowed to work at heavy labor.

(See Spanish Embassy report of August 22, 1918, showing that E. McGrath was obliged to work when suffering from wound.)

It is the custom, at least in some of the German camps, such as Westphalia, to have the camp doctor classify the men in working categories suitable to their physical condition. These classifications at Westphalia are as follows:

- 1 a — mines, coke furnaces, industries;
- 1 b — industries and agriculture;
- 2 a — agriculture and light work;
- 2 bd — work in the camp;
- 3 — unqualified to work.

The great majority of the prisoners are placed in the first category. At Westphalia camp we are advised that there have been abuses and that the recommendations of the doctor have at times been changed, and that men have been doing heavy work who were not used to such labor, in spite of the doctor's recommendations, and that this has been responsible for the death of a number of prisoners; that the camp doctor

## Prisoners of the Great War

has protested to the "Feldwebel" with reference to this conduct, but that the "Feldwebel" was neither replaced nor punished.

There have also been abuses in sending lawyers, professors, instructors, and similar types of men to work in the mines. These men were not used to hard labor of this kind, and it indicates the necessity of some provision for properly classifying the man under medical inspection for the various classes of work.

The punishments for those who would not work in productive fashion at Westphalia were frequent, and consisted of imprisonment with or without privation of nourishment, being bound to a stake, standing erect and motionless for hours, and exposure to cold after coming out of a warm room; also exposure to acid vapors or being placed in dark rooms. The present agreement should positively do away with any such form of punishment.

At certain mines or industries, lewd women have been worked with the prisoners. This should be prohibited.

Prisoners who are wounded may send telegrams to the American Red Cross, Department

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Prisoners of War, at Berne, not oftener than once a week, as to the condition of their health. The American Red Cross to transmit this information to their families. The expense of such telegrams to be borne by the prisoner, or by the American Red Cross, as may be determined.

American prisoners of war are to be permitted to receive clothing and food from French or English Help Committees.

(See telegram to Spanish Embassy, under date of August 27th, from American Legation, Berne, stating that the American Red Cross has made arrangements with the French and British camp help committees to extend assistance to American soldiers, and requesting the Prussian Minister of War to authorize the commandants of camps to permit this assistance. Also see report from the Spanish Embassy at Berlin, under date August 6, on camp at Lamsdorf, to the effect that the men were in bad condition as food supplies had not arrived from Berne, and the French camp help committee had been refused permission by the camp commandant to come to the assistance of the American prisoners on the ground that he did not know whether the French committee had the necessary permission or that he could authorize the French committee to extend such assistance.

## Prisoners of the Great War

The camp commandant appeared neither to have made enquiries nor requested instructions.)

Facilities for cooking food to be provided, and opportunity for obtaining fuel for this purpose.

Prisoner's food packages to be censored only once and this in the presence of the camp committee, if there be one, if not, in the presence of the prisoner himself.

Length of detention in quarantine to be determined, and prisoners to be permitted to advise of their presence in quarantine by telegram or card, which shall not count in the regular authorized correspondence, and also to receive food parcels. At regular quarantine camps, where American prisoners are to be sent, a permanent American Red Cross camp committee shall be left for the purpose of receiving and distributing relief supplies.

Prisoners not to be lodged in any underground huts with ventilation and light only from the roof, as was the case at Tüchel.

Adequate facilities shall be provided for the men to do their laundry work.

Bathing facilities shall be provided so that each prisoner may take a bath at least once a

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week. Prisoners who are undergoing punishment shall be provided with adequate facilities for washing and for baths at least once a week.

Prisoners of war shall be placed in a position to execute any necessary powers of attorney or other legal documents which may be required in connection with their affairs. The necessary officer for administering the required oaths, as well as witnesses, shall be provided by the captor state within one week of receipt of request from the prisoner, or from his camp committee, or from the camp committee correspondent. This service should be rendered without expense, and the sending of such documents shall not count in the prisoner's regular allowance of correspondence.

Each government shall provide death certificates in such legal form as may be required to conform to the laws of the respective governments, for all prisoners who may die while in the hands of the captor state. They shall also furnish death certificates for all aviators who shall fall and die within the enemy's lines. Each government shall furnish identification of places of burial in such form that such burial places

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may be identified and visited by the families after the war.

Each government shall return to the other the personal effects of all prisoners who die while in the hands of the captor state, and of aviators who fall within the enemy's lines. All death certificates and identification of places of burial shall be forwarded by the German Government to the American Red Cross, Department Prisoners of War, at Berne, direct or through the intermediary of the Berlin Red Cross, the Frankfort Red Cross, the Bureau de la Paix, or the International Red Cross.

The United States Government shall forward all death certificates and identification of places of burial through such channels as the German Government may direct. All personal effects of prisoners dying in prison camps and of all aviators falling within the enemy's lines shall be delivered to the Spanish Embassy at Berlin who shall send them by courier to the American Legation at Berne; the American Legation at Berne to deliver them to the American Red Cross, Department Prisoners of War, at Berne, to be forwarded to the families of the deceased.



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No American prisoner of war shall be placed in camps commonly known as "Reprisal Camps," or in any prison camp located close to munition factories or military establishments.

All prison camps shall be distinctly marked so that their character may be easily discerned from the air.

### PRISON FACILITIES

These should consist of the following:

*a.* Air space per man, enlisted, shall be not less than 7.37 cu. m.; floor space per man, enlisted, shall be not less than 3 sq. m.

*b.* Shower baths, with twenty sprays, shall be furnished for each eight hundred men enclosure.

*c.* One fifteen-hole latrine shall be furnished for each four hundred prisoners.

*d.* Prisoners of war, seriously wounded, or otherwise, shall not be sent to prisoner of war enclosures, but to hospitals.

In case prisoners are to be transferred from one camp to another or to be sent out on working parties, they shall be so notified twenty-four hours in advance and are to communicate the address to the camp committee, so that

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mail and packages may be discontinued to the old address and sent to the new.

Men on leaving camp for working parties shall always be allowed to take an adequate supply of food and clothing, also toilet articles, from their camp supplies.

Hours of work shall be carefully regulated and agreed upon.

Prisoners shall not be forbidden to talk to one another except for unreasonable periods.

Prisoners on working parties shall always be supplied with a liberal quantity of pure drinking-water, also sufficient water for cooking and bathing purposes, and shall be allowed to visit the toilets upon demand.

There have been cases where men on working parties have been refused permission to attend to the calls of nature for considerable periods, and have suffered greatly in consequence.

Censors shall not strike out from letters or lists description of contents of packages.

All packing materials, such as wooden boxes and containers, remain the property of the camp committee or the camp committee representative correspondents on labor detachments.

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They may use these packing materials for re-packing supplies to be shipped to prisoners on working Kommandos or in hospitals, and for any other legitimate purposes, such packing materials as they do not require they may serve out to be used as fuel, and if it is not required as fuel, it should be destroyed by the camp committee by burning.

In all transient camps, through which American prisoners pass to their permanent camps, there should be an American Red Cross camp committee stationed permanently, in order to take charge of the supplies of food and clothing and distribute them to the prisoners passing through.

Adequate dining-rooms and kitchens, also storerooms shall be provided at each camp, so that the men shall have ample facilities for cooking their food and a warm dry place to sit down and eat. Each prisoner shall have a place at table and a seat.

All goods lost or stolen in transit shall be replaced in kind.

There shall not be placed at each camp fewer than one hundred Americans.

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**NOTE.** There are at this time twenty camps containing eight or less American prisoners.

They shall have the right to wear the standard American uniforms, shoes, overcoats, and hats.

Parcels sent from the main camp to labor detachments must always be accompanied by a list of the contents. The lists must not be withdrawn from the parcels but must be delivered to the prisoner with his parcel.

Parcels from the American Red Cross at Berne or from the families of prisoners to the prisoners in labor detachments must never be censored in the main camps to which the prisoner belongs, but only in the Kommando where the prisoner is working and always in the presence of the prisoner or the camp committee correspondent. He shall check the contents with the list enclosed in the parcel.

The German Government shall always supply a proper mattress and at least two blankets for each prisoner, and each prisoner shall be supplied with a bed, and under no circumstances shall he be compelled to sleep upon the floor. The United States Government or the American Red Cross is to have the right to furnish one or

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two extra blankets to each prisoner and these blankets may be marked distinctly in large letters "American Red Cross" or "United States Government." Blankets may be in such color or combination of colors as the United States Government or the American Red Cross may determine, so that such blankets may be identified in case of theft.

In the case of a prisoner of war dying in prison camp, working Kommando, or hospital, his personal effects shall be delivered to the camp committee, and the camp committee must forward these effects to the Spanish Embassy at Berlin, or such other neutral agency as may be determined, who shall forward these personal effects to their embassy or legation in Switzerland to be delivered to the American Red Cross.

Places of burial of all prisoners shall be clearly marked and identified, and a plan or photograph shall be furnished to the American Red Cross at Berne.

The matter of officers' pay should be covered at the time the agreement is executed, but should be covered by a separate agreement from the

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one referring particularly to the treatment of prisoners of war, as its ratification should not be delayed by any possible disagreement over the other features of the proposed agreement for treatment of American prisoners, the principles of the agreement on officers' pay and rate having already been agreed to by the German Government as follows:

The German Government agrees to the proposals of the Government of the United States of America relative to the pay of officers who have fallen into captivity on either side. The pay to be as follows:

*1. 350 Marks, or 83.35 dollars monthly:*

*a.* First Lieutenants, Lieutenants and Feldwebelleutnants of the German Army; First Lieutenants, Lieutenants, Hilfsoberteutnants and Hilfsleutnants of the German Navy.

*b.* First and Second Lieutenants of the American Army, and the Lieutenants (junior grade) of the American Navy.

*2. 400 Marks or 95.25 dollars monthly:*

*a.* Captains, Rittmeister, and higher grades of officers of the German Army;

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Kapitanleutnants and Captains, also the higher grades of officers of the German Navy, and the Marine Troops.

- b. Captains and higher grades of officers of the American Army; the officers of the American Navy with the rank of Lieutenant (senior grade) and higher, as well as officers of the American Marine Corps of corresponding rank.

As regards the other grades, referred to by the American Government as Class III, for which the German Government had proposed two thirds of the lower rate of pay for officers, while the American Government wishes to pay these grades on an equal footing with Lieutenants, a definite decision is reserved which will shortly be made public. It is proposed that these grades be given in the meantime two thirds of the pay of the lower grade and that the regular pay of officers be put in force immediately, independent of this question.

These rates of pay apply to all officer prisoners of war regardless of whether they are active officers, officers of the reserve grade, officers of disposition or retired, or whether they are re-

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tired officers of disposition, and it applies to the same class of officers who are interned as civilian prisoners and whose rank is certified by the Government of the home state.

The German Government agrees that the pay to the amount now agreed upon shall be paid for the time already passed in imprisonment, in so far as the payment has not taken place at all during this time or not to the amount of the rates now agreed upon. In paying these sums, however, such sums are to be subtracted which were paid temporarily by the protecting power to the officers in place of the pay they had not received, as well as the surplus amounts which were paid by the American Government to German officers beyond the rates now fixed. The German Government undertakes that these excess payments will be refunded after the conclusion of peace.

These payments now agreed upon will be ordered as soon as telegraphic information has arrived from the American Government that the regulations in question, in the sense of the foregoing remarks, have been made for the German officers in America.



## Chapter XII

### ABUSES

THE following incidents are related from reports received by the author at Berne, and are considered absolutely authentic:

At Alten-Grabow Camp, in March, 1915, a man named Davergne, belonging to a regiment of chasseurs, being ill at night, crossed the court toward the toilet when a German sentinel threw himself on him and stabbed him with a bayonet. Ten minutes later he died. On complaint being made by the French adjutant of the barracks, the answer was received that: "The sentinel had his orders and, in killing the man, he had merely done his duty."

Under-officers only worked when they made the request in writing and signed it, those who would not do this being severely treated. Thirty Russian under-officers refused to sign and were taken to Alten-Grabow Camp at the end of May, 1916, isolated in a shed and condemned to walk around with a gymnastic step, under pretext of exercise. After some days of this,

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broken by fatigue and nearly starved, since but few parcels were sent from Russia, and without them it meant famine, the under-officers stated to Rittmeister Gärtner, commander of the third company of the camp, that the effort required surpassed their strength. The "rebels," as they were called, were shut up in a shed used for drying linen and among other things were forbidden to look out of the window. After twenty-four hours without food, when the bell rang for the distribution of soup, a starving Russian showed his head at one of the windows and the sentinel fired, killing him and wounding another prisoner so seriously that he died that night. Complaint was drawn up by the Russian doctor, Lieutenant-Colonel Tarlet, and addressed to the Spanish Embassy at Berlin, but was not sent, and the doctor received a warning from the Kommandantur. As a result of this incident the Captain, fulfilling the duties of camp major, who had given the sentinels the order to fire, was punished with a week's arrest for — "not being in the proper uniform at the moment of transmission of a service order." He had worn a cap and not a helmet!

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Colonel von Auer, commander of the camp, was, a few days later, promoted to the grade of major-general.

Sergeant J. Planchenault, of the 72d Infantry, gave the following information:

During the second part of November, 1916, several thousand Belgians of all ages, some but seventeen and others men of fifty, arrived at the camp of Meschede, Westphalia, all of them being civilians. Upon an order of the Kommandantur, these men had been taken from their homes (Namur, Antwerp, Liège, La Louvière, etc.) and sent to Germany to replace German workmen who had been taken from mines and factories to be mobilized.

The Germans called these convoys, "Detachments of free laborers." Upon their arrival in the camp, these "free" workers were placed in a part separated by a barricade from the prisoners of war and ordered to have no communication with the latter. Then the doctors examined them, on pretext of "health," but really to obtain the strongest for the hardest labor, which was not an easy matter. After these visits, the

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German authorities asked for volunteers, saying that they would be well paid for the work. There were only a few volunteers. Then began intimidation by hunger against the "strikers." For these men, who already gave the impression of having the germs of tuberculosis, two soups a day were served, wretched flour mixed with warm water in tubs, so well known in German prison camps.

Sickness soon made ravages, and many were sent to the hospital where they received no more food than in the camp, no medicines, and where there were no nurses to care for them. The sufferer had a bed, that was all. There was but one physician for five barracks, each containing some sixty beds, and he merely passed through one or two rooms so as to make out his papers of attendance. One day, reaching the bed of a man who was dying of a kind of blood poisoning, he refused to have the man uncovered under pretext of the odor, and left him to his fate.

There were many deaths, the bodies of many becoming so thin that the bones seemed to literally pierce the skin. This lasted from the

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middle of November, 1916, to the end of March, 1917.

For those not in the hospitals, life was even worse. Many of them were sent to the mines and factories and the rest kept in an enclosure and forbidden to leave, sentinels guarding them closely. One of them finally succeeded in climbing over the fence into the French camp where he obtained bread. Others followed. On returning to their enclosure, guns were awaiting them. But as many still made the attempt to cross the wall, the guards hid and when the unfortunates, hearing no noise, thought the field to be clear and made the attempt, they were received on the bayonets and often succumbed to their wounds. If the bayonet failed, the guard fired on them. Other prisoners would often hear their cries as they were beaten by the sentinels.

Alphonse Gaillard, a well-known poet of the Franche-Comté, was at Mannheim at the beginning of April, 1916. He saw Russians returning from the French front where they had been sent in reprisal. They were in rags and ghastly in appearance. They advanced slowly, often fall-

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ing from fatigue and weakness, their black sacks and Astrakhan caps giving these skeletons a tragic look. Arrived at their barracks, they could only sink down on the straw beds. The Frenchmen took them bread and other food, the miserable sufferers thanking them by signs or kissing the hands of their comrades. Those who knew French told how they had been for months on the Western Front, digging trenches, and doing other defense work for the Germans. They had been brutally treated and suffered from hunger and cold, many of them dying from weakness or being killed by French guns.

In April, 1916, Gaillard, together with other professional men, was sent in reprisal to the vicinity of Forbach, in the Valley of the Murg (Baden). There the men were put to hard labor and brutally treated. One form of work was as follows: A deep ditch was dug for a concrete wall. Carpenters had erected a scaffolding of several stories, on each story of which were two prisoners with shovels. Two big Germans threw earth to the upper story, the heavy clay being passed from story to story. The prisoners, who had never handled a shovel before, were

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obliged to work feverishly to keep up with the men below, knowing that any weakness meant prison and extra abuse. And this lasted for hour after hour, until late in the evening. At half-past four in the morning they were awakened and their toil began once more. And so they worked on, through the heat of summer, the rains of autumn, and the sharp winds of winter.

Gaillard was sent to Raumünsach to work on a tunnel four kilometres in length. In the darkness and the dust the prisoners worked, with the cry "Quicker, quicker!" ever ringing in their ears. At Kommando Freitag, a sentinel broke a Frenchman's arm with the butt of his rifle, and at the Kommando Krappe, in the autumn of 1916, a foreman seized a hatchet and broke the head of a man who paused for an instant.

In order to get an exact idea of the reprisals at Forbach, it is necessary to speak of the sheds, which no neutral was allowed to visit and which sheltered (?) the prisoners at the end of their day's work. That of Kommando Holzmann, where Gaillard spent some months, contained seventy Russians and Frenchmen so close to-

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gether that it was almost impossible to circulate. A few beds were occupied by the lucky ones — for the others, a board and bit of straw. There was absolute lack of hygiene and a frightful odor. The men were forbidden to leave the dormitory on Sunday to get air in the court.

But when these prisoners, at the end of their strength, were sent to some hospital, they found others in a still worse condition. There were a number of Roumanians in the hospital of Rastatt in November, 1916. After the débâcle of the Roumanian Army, thousands of prisoners were sent to the Alsace Front to dig trenches and went through every imaginable form of suffering. Nothing more terrible can be imagined than the appearance and weakness of those in the hospitals. They resembled nothing human, except for their great, sad eyes deep in the sockets.

They went by fours for the medical visit, sustaining each other, groaning as their feet touched the ground, mere shadows of men, and even then the guards struck and threatened them. To their other sufferings was added that of hunger, and at night, at the risk of being shot,



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those who could do so, cut the barbed wire and entered the French prison camp to ask for a crust of bread. The French gave what they could, but it was but little, and at night the Roumanians would go to the garbage pails containing the food of the camp pigs. The sentinels struck them, but when their backs were turned the Roumanians returned again to the garbage.

The Russians whom Gaillard saw at Mannheim were occupied with agricultural work from April to October, 1916, when they were brought back to Mannheim and told they were to be sent back to the French front. The Russians murmured and refused to go. Threats and blows were in vain. The Germans then sent them back to their barracks and deprived them of food. The following day, on the order for departure, there was the same immobility. For two days the Russians opposed the force of inertia to their enemies. On the third day, the order was given for the last time. There were frightful cries, the Russians were kicked and beaten. Suddenly they all threw themselves on the ground. The Germans immediately rushed to the kitchens and brought buckets of boiling water and

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poured over them. They sprang up but remained motionless. The Germans, furious at this stand, telephoned for the guard, who came with officers running behind them. They struck right and left, the blood flowing from their victims. The resistance was overcome and the Russians started for the station, leaving ten dead and fifty wounded lying on the ground.

In February, 1917, a number of professional men and students were taken as reprisal to the bombarded zone, and arrived at Ervillers, where the shells were falling close to them. They were placed in a miserable shack, and compelled to sleep on the ground, covered with mud, without even straw. They had marched all day without food. They had no lights, no water for washing — there was only sufficient water taken from the wells for the soup. From seven in the morning until six at night, without food or drink, guarded by numerous sentinels, they dug trenches and placed barbed wire within four kilometres of the French lines. The least refusal to work was punished by blows; or they were fastened by wires to poles for an entire

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day, during the intense cold, without being able to move. They turned red, then white, then purple and finally fainted, without bringing a thought of pity from their persecutors.

The order was that no one was to be recognized as ill and, even when they could not move, they were carried to the place of labor and remained there, lying on the ground in the cold, without any care from physicians or companions.

Frequently, the men were kept at the working place an hour after six on some flimsy pretext, starving and shivering with cold. On arriving at the camps, their covers were taken away on the pretext that they did not get together early enough in the morning, and later on the German troops stationed at Ervillers appropriated them altogether, and unspeakable suffering ensued.

As for food, they were given: in the morning, coffee; evening, barley and beet soup, occasionally a little meat or marmalade. There was one regulation German loaf of bread every four days. The prisoners were so hungry that they often ate this bread at one meal, after which

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they had to pass four days without bread. They almost lost semblance of humanity; most of them had barely strength to drag themselves back from the place of labor, and fought with their own comrades over the pittance allotted them. One evening, a case of marmalade broke and ran over the ground; the men threw themselves down and taking it in their hands, swallowed marmalade and mud! There were no parcels and no letters. They were totally isolated although but six kilometres from their own people!

These men were in the Somme region, in the neighborhood of Bapaume, with heavy rains and in deep, sticky mud. They were put to digging an immense trench with side passages, where they quickly took refuge when the shells began to rain about them. Sometimes, during the intense cold, they lit little fires in the trenches to boil water, but one day an officer noticed this and the fires were put out by the guards. At night, they went shivering to bed, ending in a sleep of utter exhaustion. In the morning, very early, they were chased out like beasts.

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Daily, many of them fell ill and on the pretext that German prisoners were left without care in France, their guards refused them medical treatment. Only the dying were taken to the hospitals in the rear where they succumbed.

There were frequent air battles over their heads; and, as they were between the German and the French guns, shells rained on them from all sides. During the "strategic retreat" of Hindenburg, they were witnesses of the systematic destruction of the country; towns and villages were dynamited, fruit trees cut down, churches and bridges blown up. It was "the order" that only a desert should remain! And, as they accompanied the Germans on this retreat, they were often stopped to allow wagons full of "booty" to pass.

They were next taken to an empty sugar mill between Arras and Cambrai and were obliged to leave between one and three in the morning for their work — five kilometres away — a long journey in the midst of raining shells. A number were wounded but none killed, although in a Kommando nearby many were killed as well — killed by the fire of their own

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people while they were forced at the point of the bayonet to work against them. Many of them hid and when caught, were beaten and shut up in a cage of barbed wire, packed closely together and kept on bread and water until the expiration of their term of punishment. They were in rags, their shoes gone, their feet wrapped up in old cloths.

On Easter Day, 1917, their parcels at last arrived and that night they had a feast, which gave them fresh strength and courage. Then came further trials and more suffering, until on the 1st of May, they started back, passing by Bouchain and Denain, where the inhabitants greeted them with joy, throwing packets of food and clothing to them as they passed. And at last they reached the Camp of Münster I, where they waited until the end of June for their letters and parcels and their return to the original camps.

In all the localities they passed there were French, English, and Russian prisoners, kept behind the battle line, some of them for two, four, and some even fourteen months — at Ervillers, Buissy, Villers. The English were in an

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indescribable state, without clothing or shoes, corpse-like. There were also Belgian and French civilians at work near the lines.

Captain Henderson, of the British Territorials, told the author that on the night of November 3, 1917, he was badly wounded by a bullet which tore away the fleshy part of the thigh, leaving the sciatic nerve exposed. His troops were compelled to fall back and left him in the hands of the enemy. After lying in the open for a long time, he was carried in by two German stretcher-bearers and for seven days his wound was not dressed. He was put into a cattle car which had not been cleaned and without a mattress to lie upon. At one station, a German Red Cross doctor, a woman, came into the car and declined to dress his wound, because she said it smelled badly, which was doubtless true, as the man had been lying for days without attention. He stated to me that the German Red Cross nurses showed the utmost neglect and contempt for the wounded Allied prisoners; that at one depot where a hospital train was standing on the siding and a troop train came in bearing

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perfectly well men going to the front, the German Red Cross nurses absolutely neglected the wounded men and took care of the well men first. He also stated that in one hospital where his wound was being dressed without ether, the German doctor several times struck him on the exposed sciatic nerve to try to make him groan or show signs of pain.

Cornelius Winant, of New York, an escaped American prisoner in the French service, told me of many abuses of which he was an eyewitness. At the time of his capture he and his comrades were marched long distances without food and water, in a nearly starved condition. He saw many Allied soldiers in a deplorable state working in the zone of the armies.

The German custom of working prisoners in the zone of the armies and under shell-fire from their own or Allied guns is so well known that it is hardly necessary to repeat it here except to emphasize the fact that the Germans had expressly agreed not to do it, and it was against the provisions of the Hague Convention which



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the Germans had signed. It is certain that this violation was personally known to the Kaiser and to Ludendorff. While Mr. Winant and his fellow prisoners, suffering for food and water, were in the zone of the enemy armies, the Kaiser and Ludendorff actually drove by in an automobile, saw them, but took no interest in their condition. In contrast to this, General Headquarters of the A.E.F. issued a positive order, G.O. No. 106, that no enemy prisoners were to be kept within the forbidden zone, and gave very explicit instructions as to the proper care and protection of prisoners of war. While on a visit to General Headquarters I was present when word was received that a few German prisoners were being employed within the forbidden zone, and orders were issued to immediately remove them.

Mr. Winant saw numerous cases of unnecessary brutality on the part of the German guards. On one occasion, at the prison camp of Giessen, when one of the prisoners failed to keep up to his position, without a word of warning the German guard kicked him with full force in the stomach. The prisoner dropped unconscious and

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was carried away. Whether or not he died is unknown.

One of the most brutal and inhuman acts of the German officials was during the typhus epidemic at Wittenburg. The camp was largely occupied by Russians at the time and the German officials withdrew all medical attention. They refused to supply the common hospital necessities, even beds and bedding. Dead and dying lay on the bare boards packed so near together that it was necessary to step over the prostrate forms to go from one to another. The meagre food was thrust into the enclosure by means of wooden chutes, and the dying men crowded out after it like animals. Into the midst of these horrors the Germans sent perfectly well French and English prisoners. It was almost certain death among the most terrible and revolting surroundings, but in reply to protests the Germans said it was a good opportunity for the French and English prisoners to get acquainted with their allies.

Then there was the "schlague." A prisoner was stripped, bent over a chair, and held by

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two guards while a third guard beat him with a thick rubber strap.

Remember always that these things were done to soldiers — brave, honorable men who, due to the fortunes of war, had become helpless prisoners in the hands of their enemies, but who were assured of humane and considerate treatment under solemn written agreements made both before and during the war.

The French-German Accord of March 15 and May 15, 1918, expressly states, under Article 25, that enemy prisoners of war will be "treated according to the laws of war as they have been fixed by international agreements; they will especially be protected against violence, public curiosity, and be treated with humanity." This same article provided further that "enemy prisoners will be, as quickly as possible, sent to concentration camps situated at least 30 kilometres from the line of fire. They will be assured appropriate housing and food. They will not be obliged to perform any work applying directly to the operations of war."

Under the Treaty of Berlin, still in force, the United States of America and the King of Prus-

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sia solemnly pledge themselves to the world and to each other that "the prisoners of war whom they may take from the other shall be placed in wholesome situations"; that they shall not be confined; that the officers shall have comfortable quarters and the men be disposed in cantonments or barracks as roomy and good as provided for their own troops, and that they shall be allowed the same rations. "And it is declared that neither the pretense that war dissolves all treaties nor any other whatever shall be considered as annulling or suspending this and the preceding articles; but, on the contrary, that the state of war is precisely that for which they are provided, and during which they are to be sacredly observed as the most acknowledged articles in the law of nature and nations." Could anything be more solemnly or clearly stated?

Were French prisoners of war "treated according to the laws of war as fixed by international agreements"?

Were they "especially protected against violence, public curiosity, and treated with humanity"?

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Were they "as quickly as possible sent to concentration camps situated at least 30 kilometres from the line of fire"?

Were they assured "appropriate housing and food"?

Were they protected from doing any work "applying directly to the operations of war"?

Emphatically no — no one of these agreements was kept by the Germans, and all were violated before this agreement was drawn, while it was being signed, and after it was signed.

As to the solemn agreement between the United States Government and the King of Prussia — were the American prisoners given the same rations as the German Army?

The American prisoners would have starved to death if it had not been for the food parcels sent to them through our organization at Berne. The German Army received the best of everything in abundance. Our prisoners were offered spoiled fish, — usually seal meat or dogfish, — blood sausages or sausages made from the entrails of animals, sometimes horse meat, substitute coffee, substitute mustard, bread made from potato flour, sawdust, and similar ingredi-

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ents, — absolutely the worst, foul-smelling, ill-looking bread I have ever seen, — bone meal, and thin, watery soups.

The condition of the Italian, Russian, and Roumanian prisoners who did not receive food supplies from their country of origin proves beyond question that the prison ration was not sufficient to sustain life for a prolonged period, and it was of a character that our men absolutely could not eat. Does any one believe that was the ration provided for the German troops? No evidence to the contrary is necessary. The reports of our neutral delegates on their inspection of prison camps almost without exception call attention to the inadequate and unwholesome food supplied to prisoners, and our returning prisoners have testified unanimously to the fact that they would have starved had it not been for the food we sent to them. I have the testimony in one telegram of 2200 American prisoners to that effect. Furthermore, our men were not placed in "cantonments or barracks as roomy and good" as provided for the German troops. Some of the camps were better than others and the conditions were fairly good;

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other camps were filthy and miserable to an extreme degree, without adequate sleeping, bathing, toilet, cooking, or hospital facilities; and the men were subjected to petty annoyances and abuses.

The A.E.F. scrupulously respected its agreement under the Prussian Treaty and all provisions of international law, and although we were not parties to the Hague Convention, the A.E.F. observed all of its provisions as to the treatment of prisoners. I personally visited the German prisoners in the hands of the A.E.F. and can vouch for the fact that they received the same rations as the American soldiers, that they were comfortably and well housed, and exceedingly well treated. I have seen German officers in our hospitals side by side with our own wounded, with the same medical attention and comforts. I personally asked a wounded Prussian officer what complaint he had to make, and his reply was, "My treatment leaves nothing to be desired."

General Order No. 106 issued by General McAndrews, Chief of Staff to General Pershing, provided specifically for the treatment and com-

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fort of enemy prisoners in the hands of the A.E.F. This order stated among other things the following:

The law of nature and of nations will be sacredly heeded in the treatment of prisoners of war. They will be accorded every consideration dictated by the principles of humanity. The behavior of a generous and chivalrous people toward enemy prisoners of war will be punctiliously observed. In strict compliance with the Hague Convention, prisoners of war will be restrained within fixed limits, but they will not be confined except as an indispensable measure of safety, and then only while the circumstances which necessitate the measure continue to exist; they will not be kept or employed within range of their own fire; they will be treated as regards food, lodging, and clothing on the same footing as the troops of the American Army; their personal belongings, including medals and identity discs, and excepting arms, horses and military papers, will remain their property, and the acceptance of gifts from prisoners as well as the appropriation of articles which have belonged to the enemy's dead are strictly prohibited. They may receive presents and relief in kind, and despatch and receive correspondence, subject only to proper surveillance and censorship; they shall enjoy liberty



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in the exercise of their religion, and they will be permitted to execute wills which will be preserved for transmission to the proper parties in interest.

All these provisions were observed by the American officers, and the German prisoners were so well treated and contented that I am informed that not a single attempt was made to escape. The conditions in the German camps were so bad, however, that our men repeatedly risked their lives to escape and return to their own lines.

## Chapter XIII

### CONCLUSION

**WHEN** the armistice was signed approximately seventy-five per cent of the American prisoners were in camps close to the Rhine and near the zone proposed to be occupied by the Allied armies. It appeared best, therefore, to have these prisoners return by way of northern France. About four hundred came out that way and I went to France and met the first prisoners to return, among them men who were at the head of our camp help committees. They stated that they had ample food and clothing, and were able to give considerable amounts of food to the starving Italians before leaving.

Corporal Meehan, of our camp help committee at Karlsruhe, stated that after having given each American enough food to provide for his return, he had one hundred and fifty boxes left (one and one-half tons) which he gave to the Italians. The returning American prisoners appeared well fed and well clothed and were in good con-



MEMBERS OF RASTATT CAMP COMMITTEE WHO VOLUNTEERED TO REMAIN  
BEHIND TO ASSIST IN THE REPATRIATION OF SICK AND  
WOUNDED AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR

Lieutenant R. B. McDowell, Private E. C. Mielewski, Corporal Joseph Sabatini, Private F. M. Ham  
Sergeant Howard P. Blount, Corporal Fred Mueller, Jr., Private H. C. Rutz  
J. Chmiel, E. E. Gurney, and Sergeant F. H. Miller

*The picture shows the excellent condition of the prisoners, thanks to the  
Red Cross food and clothing parcels*

100

100

100

## Conclusion

dition. As they were becoming badly scattered, however, General Headquarters decided it would be better to have them return in large groups by way of Switzerland.

Mr. Ralph Stewart, of Brookline, Massachusetts, was at the head of this repatriation work for the American Red Cross, and under his direction the American prisoners were promptly and comfortably returned to France. He was assisted by Mr. Ralph Bailey, of Taunton, Massachusetts, and Mr. Leon G. Levy, of San Francisco. All of these men went into Germany and personally attended to the return of the prisoners by organizing train service and automobile service, negotiating with the German officials and seeing that the needs of the prisoners were filled. Canteens were established at Zurich, Berne, Lausanne, and Geneva to provide the prisoners with food and hot drinks, and each prisoner was given three days' rations to provide for him until he reached the concentration camp in France.

Mr. W. W. Husband, of our Red Cross Staff, went to Berlin at once. Later Mr. Ralph Bailey succeeded him. Mr. Levy went to Rastatt, the

## Prisoners of the Great War

principal camp for Americans, and arranged for their removal. Mr. Alfred Ney, a Swiss, well acquainted with the German camps, was sent in to look after the sick and wounded. Dr. Ceresole, an eminent Swiss doctor, went into the southern German camps on behalf of our prisoners. Several hundred of our men were scattered among the camps in northern Germany, in which there were large numbers of English prisoners. I found that the English Government was to send special steamers to northern German ports to take their men to England. So I hastened to London and made arrangements for our prisoners in these northern camps to be brought out on the English ships. As the men returned they were concentrated principally at Vichy, where they were given every attention by the American Red Cross.

The American prisoners in Germany were not subject to any systematic or authorized physical abuse. Their clothing and personal effects were stolen and it is doubtless true that they would have starved and suffered for proper clothing, had it not been for the relief pack-

## Conclusion

ages sent from Berne, but they were not physically abused, except in rare instances.

There were good reasons for this. We always had in America more German agents in prison or internment camps than the total of all American prisoners, civil and military, in the hands of the Germans, and among these civilian prisoners were men who were held in the highest esteem and friendship by the leaders of the Prussian military party.

The American Expeditionary Forces, furthermore, after June 30, always had a large balance of German prisoners over the total American prisoners in the hands of the German military forces. The United States Government showed its determination to look after its prisoners, watch their treatment, see that they were well fed and well clothed. All these things had their effect upon the German mind. While never contemplated for that purpose, it is undoubtedly true that the food and clothing parcels sent to American prisoners constituted the best possible propaganda.

The German population had been systematically educated to believe that an American army

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of any size could not possibly be sent to France, and that even if such an army was sent, it would be physically impossible to transport the necessary food, clothing, and other supplies. And yet here were the American prisoners, scattered all over Germany, receiving from America twenty pounds per week of better food than the German population had seen for two years, and better clothing.

The effect was irresistible and spread all over Germany. It became a source of embarrassment to the German officials, and we were even told that we were sending more supplies than necessary and asked to reduce the quantity. We were informed officially that the prisoners received so much food that they were using their canned vegetables to play "pass-ball" with. Of course using a can of corn to toss around in a circle instead of a ball did n't hurt the contents any, but it made a profound impression on the Germans to see good food used in such an apparently reckless manner.

Because the American prisoners were sent food, clothing, and toilet articles to enable them to maintain their health and self-respect they



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were respected by the Germans. On the contrary, Italian and Russian prisoners who received no relief supplies, and were starved and in rags as a consequence, were treated like dogs. If the state of origin of a prisoner neglected him, the Germans felt safe to indulge in every brutality, but if the prisoner was respected, cared for, and watched by his own country, that produced a most beneficial effect upon the German military authorities and guards, especially the last year of the war, when they discovered that their brutality and reprisal camps were not spreading among the Allies the terror upon which they had counted, but on the contrary were making them fight harder and better to keep from being captured.

Nothing contained in this book should lead the reader to believe that prisoners were well treated in German prison camps, for they were not. There were thousands of abuses and physical tortures, but happily the American prisoners escaped practically all of these.

Starvation and suffering were prevented solely by the relief supplies sent to the prisoners from the outside, and all the facilities for

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recreation, exercise, amusement, and education were also supplied from other than German sources.

The Germans simply let them eat the food and wear the clothing which was sent in and which was some economic advantage to Germany. The camp commanders only permitted the prisoners to use the books, athletic goods, musical instruments, and theatrical paraphernalia sent from the outside. They did not furnish them, and they could not well deny the use of them so long as it did not interfere with the camp routine.

The German officials were always evasive, tricky, and full of deception. If they could lie out of an abuse or a bad situation they usually did so. They had little or no regard for treaties or agreements and violated them without hesitation. They did have some hesitation about outraging the feelings of what few neutrals were left in the world, after America entered the war, and would sometimes back down from violations of agreements when representatives of neutral governments took an active part in protesting.



MEDAL STRUCK BY THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT TO COMMEMORATE THEIR EXPECTED  
TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO PARIS IN 1914

From a photograph of a medal now at Basle, Switzerland

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## Conclusion

The treatment of prisoners of war in German prison camps goes hand in hand down the German path of terrorism with the asphyxiating gases, the incendiary bombs, the poisoned wells, the killing of innocent civilians, and can all be traced to the German teachings, and the certainty of the Germans that they could not be beaten and held responsible for their crimes.

Ferdinand Larnande, Dean of the Paris Law Faculty, and Dr. A. G. De Lapradelle, Professor of the Rights of Nations in the same faculty, in a recent report to Premier Clemenceau, quote a letter from the former German Emperor to the Emperor of Austria in the early days of the war, in which the German Emperor wrote:

"My soul is torn asunder, but everything must be put to fire and blood. The throats of men and women, children and the aged must be cut, and not a tree or a house left standing. With such methods of terror, which alone can strike so degenerate a people as the French, the war will finish before two months, while if I use humanitarian methods, it may prolong for years. Despite all my repugnance, I have had to choose the first system."

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A recent German book, "Der deutsche Gedanke," reflects the opinions of the intelligent classes. The leaders of German thought express themselves as follows:

The German people are always right because they are the German people and number eighty-seven millions. — O. R. Tannenberg.

Germany is the future of the human race. — M. Lehmann.

Everything that has been accomplished in the domain of art in France and Italy since the Roman period is due to the mixture of German blood and to men who have preserved in their purity the blood and customs of the Germans. — H. A. Schmid, Professor at the University of Göttingen.

One of our cultured warriors, falling in masses at the present time, has an intellectual and moral value superior to hundreds of rough and primitive men (rohe Naturmenschen) sent against us by England, France, Russia, and Italy. — Professor E. Haeckel.

The deepest mark of the German character is a passionate love, pushed to the extreme, of right, justice, and morality. A character which is not found among other races. — M. Lehmann.

Freedom which would not be German would not be freedom. — N. S. Chamberlain.

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Our enemies have not been honest towards us: we should therefore, in justice, withdraw civic rights from them (die bürgerlichen Ehrenrechte). When enemy states no longer have the right to bear arms, they will not seek to quarrel with us. — O. Siemens.

Until the end of history right will rest with arms, and therein consists the holiness of war. — H. von Treitschke.

Heaven preserve Germany from seeing a durable peace come out of this war. — O. A. H. Schmitz.

War favors the capable to the detriment of the degenerate. It is the source of all progress and without it the development of nations would be impossible. — K. Wagner.

Laugh, my Germany, that you have been recognized as the successor of your ancestors. Does not your heart swell with pride when you strike your good sword and say, "Barbarian, Present!"? Be sincere, Germany, you have never been able to bind yourself to culture; such clothing is not for your figure, it would disfigure you. Put on the wolf's clothing; it was thus that your ancestor, O Field-Gray Warrior, opposed the invasion of the stranger in the forests and swamps. Barbarian! Should we blush at this term which has such a splendid tone, so antique, so solemn? Are we go-